VISIT…

SCREENING MODERNISM

European Art Cinema, 1950–1980

ANDRÁS BÁLINT KOVÁCS

Screening Modernism

Cinema and Modernity *A Series Edited by Tom Gunning*

Screening Modernism: European Art Cinema, 1950–1980

ANDRÁS BÁLINT KOVÁCS

The University of Chicago Press CHICAGO AND LONDON

András Bálint Kovács is professor of film studies at Eotvos University in Budapest and the director of the Hungarian Institute in Paris.

The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London
© 2007 by The University of Chicago
All rights reserved. Published 2007
Printed in the United States of America

16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07 1 2 3 4 5

ISBN–13: 978–0–226–45163–3 (cloth)
ISBN-13: 978–0–226–45165–7 (paper)
ISBN–10: 0–226–45163–1 (cloth)
ISBN-10: 0–226–45165–8 (paper)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kovács, András Bálint.
Screening modernism : European art cinema, 1950–1980 / András Bálint Kovács.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-0-226-45163-3 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 0-226-45163-1 (cloth : alk. paper) 1. Motion pictures—Europe—History. 2. Modernism (Aesthetics)—Europe I. Title.
PN1993.5.E8K68 2007
791.43094'09045—dc22
2007013782

♾ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48–1992.

TO MY FATHER

Contents

Acknowledgments xi
Introduction 1

Part One: What Is the Modern?

1 THEORIZING MODERNISM 7
Modern 8
Modernism 11
Avant-Garde 14
Cinema and Modernism: The First Encounter 16
The Institution of the Art Film 20
Modernist Art Cinema and the Avant-Garde 27
2 THEORIES OF THE CLASSICAL/MODERN DISTINCTION IN THE CINEMA 33
Style Analysts 34
Evolutionists 38
Modern Cinema and Deleuze 40
Modernism as an Unfinished Project 44

Part Two: The Forms of Modernism

3 MODERN ART CINEMA: STYLE OR MOVEMENT? 51
4 NARRATION IN MODERN CINEMA 56
Classical versus Modernist Art Films 61
The Alienation of the Abstract Individual 65

Who Is "the Individual" in Modern Cinema? 67
The Role of Chance 70
Open-Ended Narrative 77
Narrative Trajectory Patterns: Linear, Circular, Spiral 78
5 GENRE IN MODERN CINEMA 82
Melodrama and Modernism 84
Excursus: Sartre and the Philosophy of Nothingness 90
A Modern Melodrama: Antonioni's *Eclipse* (1962) 96
Other Genres and Recurrent Plot Elements 99
Investigation 99
Wandering/Travel 102
The Mental Journey 103
Closed-Situation Drama 111
Satire/Genre Parody 114
The Film Essay 116
6 PATTERNS OF MODERN FORMS 120
Primary Formation: Continuity and Discontinuity 122
Radical Continuity 128
Imaginary Time in *Last Year at Marienbad* 130
Radical Discontinuity 131
The Fragmented Form according to Godard 132
Serial Form 136
7 STYLES MODERNISM 140
Minimalist Styles 140
The Bresson Style 141
Abstract Subjectivity and the "Model" 146
Bresson and His Followers 148
Analytical Minimalism: The Antonioni Style 149
Psychic Landscape? 149
Continuity 153
Antonioni and His Followers 156
Expressive Minimalism 161
8 NATURALIST STYLES 168
Post-neorealism 169
Cinéma Vérité 170
The "New Wave" Style 172
9 ORNAMENTAL STYLES 175
10 THEATRICAL STYLES 192
11 MODERN CINEMA TRENDS 203
The Family Tree of Modern Cinema 210

Part Three: Appearance and Propagation of Modernism (1949–1958)

12 CRITICAL REFLEXIVITY OR THE BIRTH OF THE AUTEUR 217
The Birth of the Auteur 218
Historical Forms of Reflexivity 224
The Emergence of Critical Reflexivity: Bergman's *Prison* 227
Reflexivity and Abstraction: Modern Cinema and the *Nouveau Roman* 231
13 THE RETURN OF THE THEATRICAL 238
Abstract Drama 241
14 THE DESTABILIZATION OF THE FABULA 244
Voice-Over Narration 245
The Dissolution of Classical Narrative: Film Noir and Modernism 246
Fabula Alternatives: Hitchcock 248
Alternative Subjective Narration: *Rashomon* 251
15 AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CLASSICAL FORM: NEOREALISM AND MODERNISM 253
The End of Neorealism 255
Modernism in *Story of a Love Affair*: Neorealism Meets Film Noir 256
Rossellini: The "Neorealist Miracle" 260

Part Four: The Short Story of Modern Cinema (1959–1975)

16 THE ROMANTIC PERIOD, 1959–1961 275
Neorealism: The Reference 276
Eastern Europe: From Socialist Realism toward Neorealism 282
Heroism versus Modernism 284
Jerzy Kawalerowicz: The First Modern Polish Auteur 286
The Year 1959 290
Forms of Romantic Modernism 293
Genre and Narration in the Early Years 295
Sound and Image 298
Background and Foreground 300
From *Hiroshima* to *Marienbad*: Modernism and the Cinema of the Elite 303
The Production System of the "New Cinema" 306

17 ESTABLISHED MODERNISM, 1962–1966 310
Western Europe around 1962 310
The Key Film of 1962: Fellini's *8 1/2* 316
Central Europe 322
Czechoslovak Grotesque Realism 324
The "Central European Experience" 326
Jancsó and the Ornamental Style 329
Summary 336
18 THE YEAR 1966 338
The Loneliness of the Auteur 341
19 POLITICAL MODERNISM, 1967–1975 349
The Year 1968 350
Conceptual Modernism: The Auteur's New World 355
Reconstructing Reality 357
Counter-Cinema: Narration as a Direct Auteurial Discourse 363
The Film as a Means of Direct Political Action 368
Parabolic Discourse 371
Teorema 373
The Auteur's Private Mythology 376
The Self-Critique of Political Modernism: *Sweet Movie* 380
Summary 382
20 "THE DEATH OF THE AUTEUR" 383
The Last of Modernism: *Mirror* 387
Mirror and Serial Structure 389
The Disappearance of Nothingness 394

Appendix: A Chronology of Modern Cinema 401
Selected Bibliography 409
Index of Names and Movie Titles 415

Acknowledgments

The idea of a book like this seems to have been with me since my days as a young researcher. When I mentioned it to Michel Marie in Paris twenty years ago, all he said was, "Hm, très ambitieux!" Twelve years passed before I ever dared to return to this idea. In 1996, at the kind invitation of Michal Friedman I presented a paper at the Blurred Boundaries conference in Tel Aviv where the first draft of my ideas about cinematic modernism was outlined. Daniel Dayan's and especially Dana Polan's encouraging comments on that piece convinced me that I was mostly likely on the right track to develop some aspects of this project. That is when I started to seriously consider beginning intensive and systematic research. I wrote preliminary drafts of chapters in 1998, but still I wasn't very sure where I was going with the project, and, not being a native English speaker, I worried that I would not be able to write this book in English. Two dear friends, Nancy Wood and David Rodowick, read and patiently edited my first drafts, convinced me to carry on, and gave the last push. I could count on their valuable comments in later phases of my work too.

I am thankful to several people and institutions that helped me in my research. First, a Fulbright grant afforded me five months of undisturbed research in the United States. The University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the University of Southern California hosted me and generously provided access to their rich resource materials, and for this I am especially thankful to David Bordwell and Dana Polan. I did my initial research at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsénale and at the Bibliothèque du Film in Paris where I kept returning at every stage of the work during the four years I spent in this city. I am grateful to Gyula Gazdag who helped me in getting access to the film and video collection of UCLA. Magyar Nemzeti Filmarchívum,

and especially Kata Szlauko, helped my research considerably in Budapest. The Pro Helvetia Foundation in Zurich and Budapest generously provided rare Swiss films. I am also grateful to two commercial video stores in the United States—Four Star Video Heaven in Madison, Wisconsin, and Vidiots in Santa Monica, California—whose rare and comprehensive video collections of European art films considerably helped me to constantly refresh my memory and deepen my knowledge while actually writing this book.

Different chapters were read and thoroughly commented on by many colleagues and friends. I am especially thankful for the comments of Miklós Almási, Béla Bacsó, Péter Balassa, Péter Galicza, Gábor Gelencsér, Torben Grodal, Péter György, Jenő Király, Sándor Radnóti, József Tamás Reményi, András Rényi, Johannes Riis, Bill Rothman, Ben Singer, Melinda Szalóky, Tom Gunning, Balázs Varga, Ginette Vincendeau and Anna Wessely. I am thankful to Dóra Börcsök for her help in the filmography research, to Deborah Lyons for her help with some of my trasnslations from Italian to English, and in particular to Maia Rigas, copy editor at the University of Chicago Press, for her exceptionally careful work in correcting some awkward English sentences and inconsistencies.

I have to express my gratitude to three individuals in particular. Yvette Biró and David Bordwell were always ready to discuss any problem whatsoever that I encountered while writing this book; they were constantly ready to listen to my ideas over and over again, comment on them, and share theirs with me with no reserve. Their experience, enthusiasm, and engagement with modern cinema and their expertise in the field served as the most important examples to me. Without their own works, without the long conversations I have had with them throughout the years, and without their supportive friendship, my book would not be the same. However, any shortcomings are my responsibility alone. Last but not least, without the commitment and lasting support of my friend Tom Gunning, series editor for the University of Chicago Press, this book would have never seen the light of day.

My wife Erika and daughter Anna-Sarah let themselves be dragged around half the planet during the past eight years, just because I wanted to do this book. Without their patience I could not have finished it.

Introduction

In the 1960s cinema found itself in a distinguished cultural position within Western culture, with filmmakers able to consider themselves the eminent representatives of contemporary Western culture. In the 1960s, modern art cinema had blossomed into the very symbol of a new "zeitgeist" for a new generation that wanted to manifest its opposition to classical bourgeois culture. Educational and cultural reforms in 1968 were hailed by a generation whose members had been raised with the awareness of an existing cinematic tradition. The members of this generation of the 1930s and 1940s were born together with sound cinema, and they regarded silent cinema as their own cultural and artistic tradition rather than as an outdated form of mass entertainment.

Even politics became involved with cinema. The demonstrations provoked by the dismissal of Henri Langlois, director of Cinémathèque Française, became the overture (albeit not the cause) of the student riots in Paris in 1968. And François Truffaut declared, "What we have here is the stupidity of an impossible regime. And also the fact that there are too many self-designed candidates for the elite. But these guys, from De Gaulle to Mitterrand, including Deferre—except the modest Mendès France—do not and will never understand what cinema is all about."[1] It never occurred to anyone then or later to judge the quality of the political elite according to its relationship to cinema. It is precisely this awareness of the cultural role of the "film generation" that is reflected in Truffaut's words. The year 1968

1. Demonstrations took place in March and April 1968. François Truffaut was one of the leaders of the protest movement. He pronounced these words at the occasion of Langlois's reinstatement on April 22, 1968. Cited in *Libération*, May 4, 1998.

was the culmination of a cultural-historical process that ushered in the era of modern cinema. Many critics and filmmakers saw in modern cinema the apogee of film art, the end result of the development of cinema, and even a kind of paradigmatic, or "most important," genre of modern culture.

During the 1970s and 1980s, cinephiles, critics, and filmmakers observed with growing embarrassment the decline of modern cinema, the vanishing of the modernist inspiration, and the reemergence of the classical or "academic" forms in art cinema. What happened? Was it film history that had come to an end, or was it simply a period of film history that was over? Witnessing the weakening of modern art cinema, the decline of movie-going in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the massive closures of movie theaters throughout Western Europe, many people would have responded that film history itself was at its end.

But the 1990s made it clear that not only was cinema as an institution still alive even in the face of the onslaught of audio-visual home entertainment, but art cinema as a distinct category within the European film industries became stronger and more institutionalized than in the past. The establishment of the European Film Academy and the Felix Prize, the creation of the European support program Eurimages, the network of Europa Cinemas, and the growth of national film production in France and Germany show that art cinema has continued to thrive in Europe. Moreover, art cinema developed dramatically in the Far East and in Iran during the last two decades of the twentieth century to the point we can say that contemporary art cinema in Asia is probably more inventive and potent than it is in Europe. More than that: contemporary Hollywood cinema also started to use sophisticated narrative solutions developed by European modern art cinema in the 1960s. Art cinema is lively, but modernist art cinema, as we have known it from the sixties, is gone.

Modernism is film history now—and not because its inception dates back decades but primarily because today's art films are considerably different from those of the 1960s. And because this considerable and systematic difference has existed for the past twenty years or so, the time is ripe for a historical investigation of the corpus of modern European art film and its aesthetic and thematic characteristics.

This book proposes a historical taxonomy of various trends within late modern European cinema covering the period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. I will not offer a universal film history of the sixties and seventies since I do not believe that modern cinema can be identified with the whole of film production of this period. Modernism in the cinema concerns a

relatively small portion of art-film production. I will argue that late modernism in the cinema was a universal aesthetic phenomenon but prevailed only in some films and only during a limited period of time.

The category of modern cinema is often related to the category of the auteur (French for "author"), and since the emergence of modern cinema it is often referred to as a "cinema of auteurship." In my analysis I also will privilege the emergence of the notion of auteurship in modern cinema. However, an auteur-centered modern cinema does not mean that these films are so different that they cannot be compared with each other, as if each director's work would represent a totally autonomous aesthetic vision. Modern art cinema, as opposed to genres and conventions, created its own "genres" and conventions. Those developed very quickly and determined the thoughts and tastes of modern auteurs. I will not consider modern art cinema as a homogeneous style any more than as a set of incommensurable and totally unique works of art. I will attempt to map the variations of modernist forms as characterizing different geographical regions, cultures, countries, or individual auteurs, and at the same time provide an overview of the historical evolution of the different trends and currents. Although the remarkable specificity of late modernism was the first global art movement in the cinema, it started out in Europe. That is where it remained the most influential, and the fundamental options of modern cinema were all developed there. Hence the main focus of this book will be on European cinema, even though I will refer from time to time to important modern films made elsewhere.

This book could have been a little shorter as well as much longer. Each of the more than two hundred films that comprise the core of the corpus of modern European art cinema could have deserved individual attention. This broadens even more when one takes into account the second- or third-rate modern art films—among which are some remarkable works. My discussion of these secondary and tertiary works could stretch the text infinitely. I tried to keep the number of examples and analyses at a level where the reader will not be overwhelmed but substantial enough to illustrate the general ideas they are meant to illustrate. I have tried to balance between pure theoretical discussion and an indigestible load of individual descriptions. In order to keep this volume between reasonable limits so that it will be affordable for students I made the decision to cut the detailed filmography of the nearly two-hundred-fifty films representing the core of my sample. An appendix contains a chronological table of these films, however, which makes it easy to locate the films temporally and geographically. Exhaustive filmographies can be found for each film on the World Wide Web at Internet Movie Database (http://www.imdb.com).

PART ONE

Fig. 1. *Rite* (Ingmar Bergman, 1969).

What Is the Modern?

:1:
Theorizing Modernism

> The heterogeneity of artworks and the inaccuracy of the concept make any attempt at a theory of aesthetic modernism almost hopeless.
> PETER BÜRGER

My primary goal in this book is to develop a notion of modern cinema in terms of stylistic history. This involves understanding modern cinema as a historically determined entity located in art-historical time and defined by a finite number of aesthetic/stylistic traits. However, I do not intend this to be a purely formalist work. I want to understand modern cinema and its various forms in its historical and philosophical contexts, which in my view are primarily responsible for the specific aesthetic forms modernism developed.

Here and in chapter 2 I will present several interconnected arguments. First, modern cinema was a historical phenomenon inspired by the art-historical context of the two avant-garde periods, the 1920s and the 1960s. Second, modern cinema was the result of art cinema's adaptation to these contexts rather than the result of the general development of film history or the "language" of cinema. Third, as a consequence of this process of adaptation, art cinema became an institutionalized cinematic practice different from commercial entertainment cinema as well as from the cinematic avant-garde. And last, another result of this process is that modern cinema took different shapes according to the various historical situations and cultural backgrounds of modernist filmmakers.

There are three terms that need distinction and clarification at the outset: *modern*, *modernist*, and *avant-garde*.[1] The use of these terms is so widespread

1. There is a huge literature on the history and the meaning of these terms. I list here those that were most helpful for me in this book. Hans Robert Jauss, "La 'modernité'

and varied and they are applied to so many different artistic, literary, philosophical and other more or less well-defined intellectual phenomena that we must distinguish their meanings in film history. We will see that the different uses and the historical controversies about these terms reemerge quite unchanged in film history. The clarification of these terms will lead us to various possible conceptions of cinematic modernism.

Modern

The term "modern" has its roots in religious history, appearing for the first time around the fifth century C.E., and it was used to distinguish the Christian era from antiquity. It is only from the seventeenth century onwards that this term was used to designate certain novel tendencies in art and literature. As Hans Robert Jauss, following W. Freund, points out, "modern" was originally used in two senses. More precisely, its meaning had two important and distinct nuances.

> *[M]odernus* comes from *modo*, which, at that time [in the fifth century] did not mean only "just," "momentarily," "precisely," but perhaps already "now," "at the moment" also—which meaning became perpetuated in the Latin languages. *Modernus* not only means "new" but it also means "actual."[2]

Modern, as meaning not only "new" but also "actual," has the power not only to signify something as yet unseen but also to supplant and supersede something. "Modern" in the sense of "new" would still allow the survival of and coexistence with the "old" along the lines of the cohabitation of different generations. But "modern" in the sense of the "actual" implies that the "old" is eliminated, that it does not exist anymore, or that it has become invalid. What is referred to as "modern" is always opposed to a past, which until the nineteenth century was commonly used to refer to antiquity.

The two opposing concepts of "antique" and "modern" were first assigned clear value judgments in the argument of "les anciens" and "les modernes"

---

dans la tradition littéraire," in Jauss, *Pour un esthétique de la réception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 179; Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987); Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art and Literature* 4 (Spring 1965): 193–201; "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *Partisan Review* 7 (July–August 1940): 296–310; "Where Is the Avant-Garde?" in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 4: 259–265; Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avant-garde* (Frankfurt am Main: Surhkamp, 1974); and Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (New York: Verso, 1989).

2. Jauss, "La 'modernité' dans la tradition littéraire," 179.

in seventeenth-century French literature.[3] Both of these views held that the ideal of beauty was the same for antique and contemporary poets. While the "anciens" maintained that antiquity has most perfectly represented this ideal, the "moderns" believed that the development of human rationality must of necessity result in the continual improvement of the representation of the classical ideal:

> [T]he moderns did not think that antiquity's ideal of beauty could have been different from their own. What they prided themselves on was only their ability to be more faithful to an ideal that the anciens had pursued less successfully.[4]

From the beginning of the opposition of antique/modern as a distinction of values we find the ideas of intellectual, technical, or cultural evolution. The early "modern" poets were convinced that artistic evolution is like technical progress whereby the ideal of aesthetic perfection is approached step by step. This resulted in a rigid opposition between the concepts of antique and modern as aesthetic values. The austerity of this opposition was softened by the late-eighteenth-century German aesthetic thinkers who inserted the category of the "classical" between the two. With the aid of the concept of the "classical," the antique ideal of beauty and the antique form of this ideal became clearly distinguished. On the one hand, "antique" as opposed to "modern" art was raised to the highest level of aesthetic perfection by Johann Winckelmann, Friedrich Schiller, Johann Goethe, and the Schlegel brothers, who considered the antique to be eternally valid as the model of true aesthetic value. On the other hand, "modern" was not simply the opposite of perfection. Modern art was not better or worse but of a different aesthetic structure, which at the same time approached the aesthetic perfection of antiquity in its own ways. "Let each one of us be Greek in his own way," said Goethe. For German aesthetic thinkers, aesthetic perfection was fully represented by antique Greek art, but they also believed that modern auteurs could reproduce it, even if in a different manner. While for *les anciens* "antique" was the only artistic model appropriate to express the ideal of beauty, to the Germans, Greek or antique was only an aesthetic ideal, and the art of the period was only one example of aesthetic perfection. Or as Jauss put it, antique art was a "comparative parallel."[5] For the Germans, and

3. For a historical treatise of the coupling of antique and modern as an aesthetic dichotomy, see Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*.

4. Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, 32.

5. Cf. H. R. Jauss, "Schlegels un Schillers Replik auf die 'Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes,'" in *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970).

a hundred years later, "modern" meant simply a different, and equally valid, way of representing the same classical ideal.

The supremacy of antique art in the realm of aesthetic values was overthrown by romanticism. Those artists rejected not only the classical form but also the classical ideal of beauty for the sake of an aesthetic ideal dictated by contemporary taste. From the late nineteenth century on, it is the "modern" that embodies the aesthetic ideal, while "classical" gradually came to mean "outmoded," "conservative," and "invalid." The cult of the "modern" in art lasted at least until the early 1970s, at which point the term and the idea of the "postmodern" surfaced and abolished the illusion that art constantly passes through aesthetic revolutions. With the advent of the postmodern, modern ceased to signify new artistic phenomena emerging after the late nineteenth century and belonging to the endless era of artistic and social revolutions. Henceforth, "modern" signified phenomena representing the era of modernity, and its strict opposition with the "classical" tended to diminish. Thus, we can speak about "classical modernity," referring to the everlasting aesthetic values of one–time subversively new works of art.[6]

In fact, the dichotomy of classical and modern contains three different dichotomies.[7] One is the difference between the old and the new (according to their original historical meaning); second, it refers to the opposition between valid and invalid (whichever belongs to one and to the other value, like in the quarrel of "les Anciens et les Modernes" and within romanticism); finally, the dichotomy can be used to designate two different aesthetic models or ideals. For example, in Schiller's view, there is an organic, "natural" model, which is the antique, and an actual, intellectual, or "sentimental" model, which is the modern. Baudelaire says that the work of art has to answer to two different aesthetic ideals: it has to be both antique and modern at the same time, "modernity becomes antiquity": "Modernity is the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of the art. The other half is the

6. Cf. Jürgen Habermas: "[M]odernity itself gives birth to its own classicism—we can now obviously speak of classical modern." "An Unfinished Project: Modernity," in *A posztmodern állapot* (Budapest: Századvég-Gond, 1993), 155. Here "classical" is not an opposite of "modern" but a value judgment meaning "something that endures," while "modern" simply means a value-free description of something that is new.

7. According to Calinescu, the notion of "modern" is subsumed by the category that Wellek and Warren called "period terms." In his view all period terms have "three fundamental aspects of meaning: they imply a *value judgment*, they refer to *history*, and they describe a *type*." My analysis basically fits in with Calinescu's categorization. Cf. Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, 87.

eternal, the immovable." For Baudelaire, the artist should express eternal values and ideals through the actual and transitory form of the world.[8]

Modernism

The diffusion of the positive idea of the modern in the nineteenth century gave way to the emergence of other variations of this notion, such as "modernity," "modernism," or "modernist." All these terms have been widely used in art history and aesthetics ever since. Appearing as a term in religious history and literary criticism during the late nineteenth century,[9] the notion of "modernism" became widely employed in the history of literature and art following the 1940s. In art history, it was the influential American art critic Clement Greenberg who first used this term not only for a style or a specific movement but also for a whole period in art history. He included in this term all artistically valid movements and styles starting with the French painter Manet. He calls modernism "almost the whole of what is truly alive in our culture."[10] For Greenberg, modernism is an artistic movement capable of authentically expressing the experience of the contemporary world. While he holds that the most important values of modernism are authenticity and actuality rather than being simply new and different, he sees it as an essentially historical phenomenon embedded in the aesthetic traditions of the history of art.

> [A]rt gets carried on under Modernism in the same way as before. And I cannot insist enough that Modernism has never meant anything like a break with the past. It may mean a devolution, an unraveling of anterior tradition, but it also means its continuation. Modernist art develops out of the past without gap or break, and wherever it ends up it will never stop being intelligible in terms of the continuity of art. . . . Nothing could be further from the authentic art of our time than the idea of a rupture of continuity. Art is, among many other things, continuity. Without the past of art, and without the need and compulsion to maintain past standards of excellence, such a thing as Modernist art would be impossible.[11]

8. Baudelaire, "La Modernité," in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1980), 797–798.

9. The first appearance of the term "modernism" dates to 1737 by Jonathan Swift (*Oxford English Dictionary*); in French, 1879 (*Petit Robert*). As a term, it originally designated a Latin American literary movement and a Roman Catholic theological trend of the late nineteenth century.

10. Greenberg, "Modernist Painting."

11. Ibid.

Greenberg also insists on the notion that modernism is not an everlasting aesthetic norm.

> My own experience of art has forced me to accept most of the standards of taste from which abstract art has derived, but I do not maintain that they are the only valid standards through eternity. I find them simply the most valid ones at this given moment. I have no doubt that they will be replaced in the future by other standards, which will be perhaps more inclusive than any possible now. . . . The imperative comes from history, from the age in conjunction with a particular moment reached in a particular tradition of art.[12]

Greenberg emphasizes the historicity rather than the normative character of modern art. He does not consider modernism as superior in any way to previous periods of art history. He sees modernism as part of an organic development of the history of art, as something that fits in smoothly with earlier artistic traditions. This may be why he does not pay much attention to modernist movements that in fact wanted to break with the past radically and claim superiority over artistic traditions. Nor does he raise the question of the extent to which the traditional notion of art has changed during the hundred years of modernism. He identifies modernism globally with one general trait: aesthetic self-reflection. Modernism, says Greenberg, is nothing but the aesthetic self-criticism of art.

He is quite right when he sees in modernism the prominence of the aesthetic dimension, and at its origin, a radical separation from all other dimensions of life. Modernist art in the nineteenth century consisted of an exodus of the artist from the social and political arena, which served as an important inspiration for the abstract character of modernism. "[Modern art is not] an about-face towards a new society, but an emigration to a Bohemia which was to be art's sanctuary from capitalism."[13] But while Greenberg insists on the purely aesthetic nature of modern art, he disregards modernism's later developments that culminated in politically committed movements, which ultimately turned artistic self-criticism not only against traditional aesthetic reflection but against modern aesthetic isolation as well.

Movements conventionally considered avant-garde, like Soviet futurism and constructivism, Italian futurism, parts of German expressionism, and French surrealism, don't easily fit within Greenberg's notion of modernism. Yet Greenberg does not have a notion of the avant-garde distinct from modernism. For him, the avant-garde is not the elite of modernism but instead

12. Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," 296–310.

13. Ibid.

the elite of the contemporary art world in general: that is, simply the name he gives modernism.[14] The two aspects of Greenberg's view of modernism mentioned above are probably not independent of each other. He conceives of modernism as a period of art history, which drives him to perceive it as a homogeneous phenomenon. He even goes so far as to speak of a "period style" of modernism as a whole.[15]

Greenberg conceives of modernism as a transitory, historical phenomenon valued within the continuity of the traditions of the history of art. At the same time, he fails to give a comprehensive account of modern art due to his insistence on the conceptual homogeneity of modernism. This we will have to take into consideration when we define cinematic modernism. It is important to ask whether there exists a consistent concept of modernism at all when one includes politically committed movements and claims to break with the past, like in the case of futurism and Dadaism. Modernism creates new values through its dispute with the classical. Modernism does not value the new simply for being new; rather, it originated in a critical-reflexive relationship with tradition. Thus modernism simultaneously affirms and negates continuity with tradition. Although in Greenberg's conception this duality is clear, since he conceives of the reflexive character of modernism as a stylistic form, he does consider it a paradox. Thus he does not differentiate between modernism and avant-garde. Yet, it is in this distinction that the paradoxical aspect of modernism comes to the surface. In fact, for those who pay enough attention to that difference, modernism as a homogeneous concept is particularly problematic.[16] Suffice is to say that if we agree with Greenberg's characterization of modernism—as a period within art history of aesthetic self-criticism of the arts—we will have to be prepared to go fur-

14. Greenberg uses the term "avant-garde" in his essays as a simple synonym for modern art. Cf. Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," in *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*, ed. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: Free Press, 1957), 98–107. See also Greenberg, "Where Is the Avant-Garde?" in *Collected Essays and Criticism*, 4: 259–265.

15. Clement Greenberg, "Our Period Style," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 4: 323–326.

16. For example, that is why Peter Bürger considers that a general theory of aesthetic modernism is "hopeless." The reason is the "aporia of aesthetic modernism": "Within modernity, art is continuously aimed at the conditions which make it impossible to realize. . . . this art is necessary *and* impossible at the same time." Peter Bürger, *La prose de la modernité* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994), 397. And Antoine Compagnon, in his *Cinque paradoxes de la modernité* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), considers that the fundamental paradox of modernism is that it affirms and rejects art at the same time.

ther and make room for modern movements whose criticism extends beyond the aesthetic limits. Transgressing the aesthetic means transgressing the limits of art. Since we speak of self-criticism, our concept of modernism should be able to handle extreme cases of this self-criticism, in other words, those that go beyond the limits of art. Therefore, it will be impossible to avoid the distinction between "modernism" and "avant-garde" jeopardizing the homogeneity of our concept of aesthetic modernism.

Avant-Garde

There are a number of theorists who thought it necessary to make a distinction between "modernism" and "avant-garde." In general, "avant-garde" is used to designate politically conscious, antibourgeois, activist art movements:

> The most prominent students of the avant-garde tend to agree that its appearance is historically connected with the moment when some socially "alienated" artists felt the need to disrupt and completely overthrow the whole bourgeois system of values, with all its philistine pretensions to universality. So the avant-garde, seen as a spearhead of aesthetic modernism at large, is a recent reality.[17]

Although Calinescu distinguishes between avant-garde and other modernist movements, his distinction is not substantial. He considers the avant-garde as an extreme case, a "spearhead" of modernism. Other theorists make a more clear-cut distinction based on the avant-garde's aggressive, utopian, future-oriented momentum. Antoine Compagnon sees in the avant-garde a "historical consciousness of the future and a will of being ahead of time," while modernism is a "passion of the present."[18] And according to Raymond Williams, "the avant-garde, aggressive from the beginning, saw itself as a breakthrough to the future: its members were not the bearers of a progress already repetitiously defined, but the militants of a creativity that would revive and liberate humanity."[19]

Some interpretations of the avant-garde go so far as to oppose it to modernism. A good example of this difference can be found in Peter Bürger's theory of the avant-garde.[20] In Bürger's view, the avant-garde is an artistic

17. Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, 119.
18. Compagnon, *Cinque paradoxes de la modernité*, 48.
19. Williams, *Politics of Modernism*, 51.
20. Bürger, *Theorie der Avant-garde*.

movement of the twentieth century that denies the autonomous character of the work of art and affirms the reintegration of art into the realm of everyday life. As such, avant-garde radically opposes "aesthetic," modern movements, which, by turning away from art's social functions, fit the category of pure aesthetic self-criticism. Modernism institutionalizes art qua art. The avant-garde attacks artistic institutions on the premise that institutionalization confines art to its pure aesthetic dimension and isolates it from its social functions. This, says Bürger, signals a radical change in the notion of the work of art since art, for the avant-garde, is not an end in itself. While "aesthetic" modernism affirms art as an independent world, the avant-garde work of art is a social, political, and philosophical manifesto. When the avant-garde claims reintegration into every-day life, it is by no means reintegration into the banality of everyday life, which modernism had turned away from. Avant-garde demands everyday life to be changed, but not through aesthetic values. Artistic and social revolution should go hand in hand, and art should be another intellectual practice promoting social revolution. The elitist thrust of avant-garde art movements stems precisely from the wish of artists to become spiritual leaders—not only in the world of art but also in that everyday life they want to change by artistic means. In this sense, avant-garde movements are essentially political and antiartistic.

This short overview will conclude with a review of some of the distinctions and dilemmas raised by the three important terms of modern art. "Modern" in the most general sense means the value of the actual or simply the new as opposed to the old or bygone (whether or not these are endowed with the value of the eternal). But sometimes it is simply used as an adjective meaning good art in some cases or bad art in other cases. Modernism designates an art-historical period characterized by the cult of the modern (actual) and certain general aesthetic features, such as abstraction or self-reflection. This raises the question as to what extent the aesthetic content of this particular period can be considered a set of homogeneous features. Finally, in the sphere of the avant-garde, the cult of the modern is driven by a revolutionary, activist thrust whereby aesthetic programs go beyond artistic creation, typically willing to blur the boundaries between art and social life. But the variety of avant-garde movements and the difference between the two major avant-garde periods, that of the 1920s and the 1960s, raise the question whether political activism or aesthetic radicalism lies closer to the essence of this concept. Defining different aspects of cinematic modernism entails tackling all these questions.

Cinema and Modernism: The First Encounter

Accepting that the common ground in all definitions of artistic modernism is that modern art is an aesthetic reflection on and a critique of its own traditional forms, cinematic modernism is a special case when compared to other forms of modern art. During at least the first sixty years of film history, one could not reasonably speak about a cinematic tradition whatsoever. Cinema as a cultural tradition was first invented by the auteurs of the French new wave. Jean-Luc Godard says, "A contemporary writer knows that authors such as Molière or Shakespeare existed. We are the first filmmakers who know that a [D. W.] Griffith existed. At the time when [Marcel] Carné, [Louis] Delluc, and [René] Clair made their first films, there was no critical or historical tradition yet."[21] Obviously, the modernism of the 1920s could not be a "reflection on cinema's *own* artistic traditions."

In the early 1920s clear ideas emerged in film criticism about what "real" cinema should be like, and with that an intensive critique of a kind of theatrical "artistic" mass production of European films. The main factor in the emergence of early modernism during the 1920s was not a critical reaction against the narrative standards that were just becoming norms. Some theoreticians and critics of early modern cinema considered emulating even the realist, linear, and continuous narration of the American model. Far from opposing the "Hollywood norm," Delluc, a prominent figure of early French modernism, remarked in 1921 that the real film drama was created by the American cinema, and he called on the French to follow this way of filmmaking.[22] Similarly, Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov criticized the "Germano-Russian" theatrical style and praised American narrative films for their dynamism, speed, and their use of close-ups.[23] The rise of late modernism in the 1950s witnessed the same relationship of modern European filmmakers to classical American cinema. French new wave critics of the *Cahiers du cinéma* attacked not Hollywood films or narrative in

21. In Guido Aristarco, *Filmmű vészet vagy álomgyár* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1970), 355.

22. Louis Delluc, "Le cinéma, art populaire" (1921), in Louis Delluc, *Le cinéma au quotidien*, Écrits cinématographiques, 2, pt. 2 (Paris: Cinémathèque Française-Cahiers du cinéma, 1990), 279–288.

23. Vertov writes in his manifesto, *Kino-phot* (1919, revised in 1922): "We consider the Russian-German psychological drama, charged with infantile daydreaming and memories, a stupidity. The Kinoks are grateful to the American adventure film for its dynamism, for the rapidity of changes of shots and for the close-ups . . . It is better quality, but still it has no foundation." In Georges Sadoul, *Dziga Vertov* (Paris: Éditions Champs Libres, 1971), 59.

Fig. 2. A cubist setting: *L'Inhumaine* (Marcel L'Herbier, 1924).

general, but—in the words of Truffaut, "a certain tendency of French cinema." Just like some thirty years earlier, the action-centered Holly-wood narrative was an important inspiration for late modern cinema, as opposed to the "dead classicism" of European bourgeois middle-class drama, which had less to do with classical narrative norms than with nineteenth-century bourgeois theater.

Early modern filmmakers critiqued not so much popular narrative cinema as the artistic utilization of cinema, which they themselves were busy modernizing. Because cinema did not have an artistic tradition proper to its medium to modernize, there were different ways to achieve this goal. One way to bring out the artistic potential of cinema was to create cinematic versions of modernist movements in fine arts, theater, and literature, or simply fit cinema in with narrative and visual forms of the national cultural heritage. In this sense, early modernism was *cinema's reflection on artistic or cultural traditions outside of the cinema.* German expressionism was the first appearance of that kind of modernism in the cinema. Expressionism tried to organically apply extracinematic artistic means to cinema. No filmmaker before expressionism thought of doing this to such an extent, and nobody conceived of cinema as an art related to artistic modernism. The importance of expressionism in this respect is that it institutionalized cinema as a medium capable of modern visual abstraction.

Again, the modernity of expressionism is not to be found in how it differs from the canonized norms of narrative cinema. In fact, as far as narrative is concerned, German expressionist films were not at all subversive, and they respected most classical rules. The extremely unrealistic character of some of their narratives was probably unusual in Hollywood terms, but they were not at all anti-Hollywood in their principles. Expressionist films were in fact the first models of some of the most popular Hollywood

genres, such as vampire and monster movies and psychothrillers. Even their unusual and extravagant visual devices turned out to be familiar to the Hollywood visual universe. On the one hand, the success of the German filmmakers who emigrated to Hollywood in the 1930s shows that their cinematic culture in fact harmonized well with the Hollywood way of thinking. On the other hand, the stylistic renewal of the American cinema by Orson Welles and film noir in the 1940s had its foundation precisely in expressionist cinematography. Later on, the formal principles of other modernist and avant-garde movements appeared in the cinema as well, such as surrealism (Fernand Léger, Luis Buñuel, Salvador Dalí, Man Ray, and Germain Dulac), futurism (Vertov), Dadaism (Clair, Francis Picabia, Hans Richter) and cubism (Marcel L'Herbier). However, only expressionism and surrealism had a lasting impact on the development of cinema. But other experiments with modernist visual devices and sequential principles were also important to the institutionalization of cinema as a modern form of art.

Another aspect of early modernism's reflexive character was its search for the "pure" form of the cinema. While in the trend discussed above the rejection of the narrative function was not always a conscious choice, in the "pure cinema" trend of early modernism it was one of the main principles. Cinema was to be affirmed as an independent art form by isolating its tools from those of other art forms, especially literature and drama. The "absolute film" movement and other early forms of experimental cinema viewed film as a purely visual art in which literary and dramatic forms were not organic parts. This movement concentrated mainly on the technical aspects of the medium as the foundation of its aesthetic specificity. The representation and manipulation of movement, the articulation of time (rhythm), and the unusual association of images were the three main paths the "pure cinema" trend followed. By the end of the 1920s some of its representatives came to articulate this conception as an alternative to the "traditional" representation of reality. Walter Ruttman, Jean Vigo, but above all, Dziga Vertov applied "pure cinema" aesthetics to the construction of an image of reality that would be an alternative to that of classical narrative cinema.

There is yet a third way in which modernism informed the cinema of the 1920s. This trend was the least spectacular, but its impact was the most important for the future development of cinematic modernism. This is the movement that Henri Langlois named "French impressionism." Auteurs like Germaine Dulac, Louis Delluc, Jean Epstein, Abel Gance, and Marcel L'Herbier are counted among its representatives. The idea of proving that cinema is a modern art form in its own right is the driving force of this

movement, but like German expressionists, French impressionists did not deny the narrative nature of cinema and did not look for cinema's "essence" in abstract visual and sequential principles. As we have seen with Delluc, the main theorist of French impressionism, they rejected above all the theatrical staging of a psychological drama and the visual illustration of a literary plot. Cinema had the potential to represent not only the external form of physical events and human actions but also the inner life and the mental processes of the characters. Impressionism realized a kind of psychological representation in which mental states and processes appeared as a visual reality—thus engendering an important trend of the modernist wave of the sixties. At the same time, they preferred the visual rhythm that followed the poetic logic of the composition to the monotony of a chronological composition. Delluc criticized Gance for not being "an inventor of rhythm and thought" and L'Herbier for being "sometimes more of a writer than a filmmaker" and for "sacrificing from time to time the splendor of the rhythm."[24] The prevalence of visual rhythm in the composition also contributed to the construction of a psychic reality in which external and internal sensual stimuli tended to replace physical events. In this respect, the label of "impressionism" is only partially correct, for originally it was used in art history to designate a technique of representing visual surface effects. In French "impressionist" cinema, it was only one aspect of the form and mainly used to underpin the mental character of the narrative motivation. French "impressionist" cinema was also deeply symbolic and psychological inasmuch as the representation of mental images became an alternative dimension of physical reality. It was the most synthetic phenomenon of early modern cinema. It applied extracinematic artistic effects[25] like German expressionism, it used abstract rhythmic and visual construction like "pure cinema," unusual associations of images like surrealism, and it remained fundamentally narrative-based. The specific character of French impressionism in the modernist movement was that it invented a different way to represent the psychological, the center of which was not the external acts of the character but his/her inner visions. In the final analysis, early modernism initiated three major techniques that were taken over by late modernism: reference to extracinematic modern art, exploration of cinema's potential for visual and rhythmic abstraction, and

24. Louis Delluc, *Écrits cinématographiques*, vol. 1, *Le cinéma et les Cinéastes*, 166–167.

25. For example, Léger's decors in L'Herbier's *L'Inhumaine* (1924), or the use of the Alhambra as a setting in *Eldorado* (1921).

the establishment of a relationship between mental and physical dimensions of characters.

Early modernism sought cinema's potential to become an art in the *modern* sense, even though the claim to be "modern" is not emphasized in its aesthetics.[26] As cinema approached other *modern* arts, a critique arose concerning the kind of cinema that took inspiration from premodern, classical forms of art. As a consequence of this early modernization process, a special institutional practice of making films came into being: commercial art cinema. Modernism was not the modernization of the cinema in general. In both periods it was the modernization of the artistic utilization of the cinema. Cinematic modernism is art cinema's approach to modern art.

The Institution of the Art Film

An interesting testimony about which basic forms of the cinema were recognized in the twenties can be found in an anecdote from 1923 recalled by Jean Epstein.[27] A journalist had asked Epstein his opinion on the essential form of the cinema: the documentary, the big spectacle, the "stylized film in a cubist or expressionist taste," or the "realist film." Epstein turned down the first three options. But he could not interpret the fourth one. He said he "did not know what realism in art was." What did the journalist have in mind when talking about "realist film"?

Another example will help us clarify this. Less than a year later, an article appeared in *Le Figaro* written by a certain Robert Spa explaining the different existing forms of cinema. He talks about a certain "intermediate category" (le moyen terme):

> Is not there a way between the most banal films and the search for an art pushed to the extreme, enchanting only mental cubists; a third way, which takes themes taken from real life, based on the similarities with life as we live it, and which is original in its conception and by the careful research for an art by the director?[28]

It is clear that for the public, and hence for the journalist, there existed a type of film that could not be categorized appropriately. It was a kind of dramatic social fiction (storytelling but in a realist way), which was seri-

26. Sometimes this claim also becomes explicit. Vertov writes in his "Kino-glaz" manifesto: "My life is directed to the creation of a new vision of the world. This is how I translate in a new way the world that is unknown for you." In Sadoul, *Dziga Vertov*, 82.

27. Jean Epstein, *Écrits sur le cinéma* (Paris: Séghers, 1974), 1: 199–120.

28. Cited in *La cinématographie française*, March 22, 1924, 27.

ous and looked like art—but not in the avant-garde sense. Its seriousness stemmed from its social concerns. It was narrative-based, therefore placed in the commercial circuit, but not made for the satisfaction of the widest possible audience. This type of film existed, but was not crystallized enough to be recognized by Epstein as a basic form of the cinema. Nonetheless, it is this intermediate form that will be our focus.

Can we speak of institutionalized film practices other than the commercial, the nonfictional, and the avant-garde? This question is important for us in order to understand the status of modernism within film institutions: is it a style, a movement, or an independent film practice? As we can see from Spa's question addressed to Epstein cited above, apparently avant-garde film was not the only alternative nondocumentary film practice that had emerged in the twenties. There was yet another practice that later became one of the most prominent film types in Europe—the art film—whose "intermediate form" Epstein did not recognize as an art form and that Clair rejected as pseudo-art in the early twenties.

"Modern cinema" as a concept appeared in the 1940s. The opposition between "classical" and a "modern" cinema is a genuinely postwar creation.[29] Filmmakers before the Second World War had the choice of making a documentary, a narrative film, or an avant-garde film; a "modern film" did not yet exist as a choice. Making a film was considered in itself a modern form of art making. The distinction between art film and entertainment film soon appeared among filmmakers and critics. Early film history abounds with statements by filmmakers, journalists, and theorists claiming that film is art or must become art. Interestingly enough, among them was Louis Feuillade, one of the great figures of the early adventure film who in 1911 called for an "innovation to save French cinematography from the influence of *Rocambole* in order to drive it towards the highest objectives."[30]

However these claims were not aimed at the creation of an institutionalized art cinema. When we speak of "art films" as opposed to "commercial entertainment films," we are referring not to aesthetic qualities but to certain genres, styles, narrative procedures, distribution networks, production companies, film festivals, film journals, critics, groups of audiences—in short, an institutionalized film practice. Their respective products are no

29. The notion of "classical cinema" appeared, however, at least as early as 1920. It was used in the sense of a film that by its technical perfection is capable of "producing beauty," and not as an opposition to "modernism." Cf. A. Ozouff, "Le cinéma classique," in *Film* 176 (December 1920).

30. *Le cinéma d'art et d'essai* (Paris: La documentation Française, 1971).

better or worse than those of others and are not "artistic" or "entertaining" by nature. That is why the label "art film" is often a source of confusion when it is opposed to the commercial industry. Art films are "artistic" by ambition but not necessarily by quality, just as commercial entertainment films can very often be commercial failures and not entertaining at all.

The origins of the concept of the "art film" as an institutional form of cinema can be traced back to the late 1910s. In 1908 a production company was founded in France named Film d'art, and the same year saw the opening in the rue Charras in Paris of the first movie theater dedicated to the distribution of so-called art films. However, Film d'art did not manage much more than popular adaptations of successful stage dramas and had little to do with what later became, according to the French terminology, a film *d'art et essai*. Film d'art was artistic only in a very conservative sense, which led to animosity among early avant-garde filmmakers toward Film d'art. For them, Film d'art was nothing but a compromise with traditional narrative and drama, or as Epstein put it, Film d'art was "filmed theater." They saw in it the pretension rather than the reality of being artistic. For them, film as art was the cinematic medium used according to its pure principles. Film had to be acknowledged as a form of art in a *modern* sense as well before strong institutions could be created around it. That is the reason as well for the relatively late institutionalization of the art-film industry. What is certain, however, was that the ambition to realize this appeared quite early in the cinema with attempts at some sort of institutionalization.

In 1915, American poet Vachel Lindsay published a book in which he defined "the art of the moving picture" and distinguished it from the "mere voodooism" of the film industry.[31] Not only does he claim that film is an art, but he also recognizes the difference between entertainment and cinema as an art institution. He asserts that art-film movie theaters should be like art galleries, a gathering place for art lovers. For this reason he thinks musical accompaniment unnecessary: "The perfect photoplay gathering-place would have no sound but the hum of the conversing audience."[32]

The idea of the specialization of film exhibition was nowhere near realized at the end of the 1910s. In an article in *Le cinématographie français* in 1919, an author predicts the full specialization of theaters according to genres by 1930. He envisioned the audience going to a "comic theater," a "lyrical theater," or a "dramatic theater" depending on whether they wanted to laugh,

31. Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916).

32. Lindsay, *Art of the Moving Picture*, 189.

cry, or be shocked, respectively.[33] But in fact, in the early twenties in England specialization only meant trying to screen films whose "artistic quality" would translate into big audiences.[34] Hitherto specialization had been determined by genres or artistic quality, supposing that the better a film is, the bigger audience it would attract.

In 1924 another category for specialization appeared in France: "quality films" that do *not* attract big audiences. Jean Tedesco, the director of the theater Le vieux colombier between 1924 and 1930, realized the need for a specialized distribution system for certain films that were of high "artistic" quality but unsuitable for a large distribution, because "the distributors disdainfully refused the masterpieces with the certainty of infallible judgment."[35] It was Dulac who looking back in 1932 saw in this the emergence of an intermediate category:

> The specialization of exhibition—the necessity of which was first realized by Jean Tedesco—has this surprising result of letting the audience get in contact with works which it would not tolerate otherwise in other theaters, and to *support as well film trends that want to be commercial, but not enough to pander to nervous ignorants*.[36]

This is the first time that artistic quality is emphatically separated from financial success. Dulac's comment makes a distinction not between commercial and noncommercial cinema, which was clearly present in the 1920s, but between *two kinds of commercial film practices*. He defines the art film neither as a quality nor as a genre (filmed theatrical adaptation), but as a category of film "that want to be commercial but not enough . . .," which is the first detectable sign of the emergence of a particular type of film—"the intermediate category."

At the time the need for institutionalization was not at all evident. An anecdote about the opening of Le vieux colombier illustrates this point. Among the films on the program was Arthur Robison's *Shadows* (1923), a

33. V. Guillome Danvers, "En dix-nuf-cent-trente," *Le cinématographie français* 15 (1919): 9.

34. We can read in the *La cinématographie Française* in 1922 (no. 168, p. 29): "The fashion of releasing the big films in big theaters seems be established definitively. Several United Artists productions will be shown at the Empire Theater (London). However, Griffith's *The Orphans*, which should be released within two months, will not find a place there. Another big theater was reserved for this sensational show."

35. *Souvenirs du Vieux Colombier* (cited by B. Van Mierop, "AFCAE: *Réplique à la crise du cinéma?* Mémoire de fin d'études a l'IDHECm," thesis, Paris, 1965).

36. Dulac quoted in Henri Fescourt, *Le cinéma, des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Éd. du Cygne, 1932), emphasis in the original.

film belonging to the expressionist movement but lacking excessive expressionist stylization. The audience, for whom the avant-garde was the only possible alternative to "common" movies at that time, was frustrated by this film, which they found to be not avant-garde enough. One spectator complained to Tedesco, "I came here to see the avant-garde, but in this film I haven't found any!" [37]

Dulac's remark—films commercial "but not enough . . ."—foreshadows a conflict that from the fifties on will characterize the relationship between art cinema and the entertainment industry. At the roots of this conflict lies the struggle of narrative art cinema for a paying audience. The non-narrative avant-garde defined itself from the outset as noncommercial and addressed to a specialized audience. The commercial "but not enough" art-film industry, however, would be in direct and never-ending institutional competition with its fully commercial counterpart. Distributors and exhibitors realized that the contradiction between the industrial character of the cinema and the artistic use of this industry could be resolved by a special institutional network that gathers and concentrates paying audiences for that specific kind of cinema. And they were convinced that there was an audience who would pay for art films—the intellectual elite. As the founders of Le Studio des Ursulines put it in 1926: "We want to recruit our audience from the elite of the writers, artists, and intellectuals of the Latin Quarter, an increasing number of whom refuse to attend the movie theaters because of the poor quality of some spectacles." [38] Thus in the middle of the twenties we can see not simply the separation of film institutions but also the genesis of the distinction between elite and mass culture in the cinema. This distinction will be the ideological basis for the strengthening of the art-film industry.

But specialization was only the first step. It was quickly apparent—in the early 1930s—that the semicommercial narrative art-film institution could not survive without state support. In 1921, Germany adopted a law making films of "artistic or national educational value" eligible for a reduction of up to 50 percent of the normal tax on admission tickets. The first feature film to benefit from this was *Fridericus Rex* (1922) by a Hungarian director, Arzén von Cserépy.[39] Only in 1937 did the French minister for education and fine arts, Jean Zay, try to follow Germany in supporting "quality films" when he de-

37. In *Cinéa-Ciné pour tous*, 25 December 1924, 7.

38. Cited in Vincent Pinel, *Introduction au ciné-club: Histoire, théorie, pratique du ciné-club en France* (Paris: Les éditions d'ouvrières, 1964), 29.

39. Paul Monaco, *Cinema and Society: France and Germany during the Twenties* (New York: Elsevier, 1976), 47.

clared his intentions to pass a law for the financial support of French "quality-film production." However, this project was not realized at the time. In both cases, however, artistic quality was meant to be acknowledged only within a national context. There was no intention of supporting "quality films" of other nations. While both German and French film industries were fighting for different protectionist regulations penalizing film import all through the 1920s (with very little success),[40] emerging art-film theaters in Paris showed German and American films as well, embracing artistic quality in film regardless of national origin. Official circles in both Germany and France recognized the importance of cinema in raising national consciousness. State support followed to burnish national prestige through film. In 1939 the National Grand Prix of the Cinema was established in France, which during the Occupation was renamed the Grand Prix of the French Art Film.

But it was only a matter of time until the international character of the art-film industry broke through. The first sign of this came as early as 1934, with the establishment of the annual international film festival of Venice. The idea was taken up by France in 1939 with the Cannes Film Festival, though this could not be realized because of the Second World War.[41] The Venice Film Festival was also eventually suspended, and both festivals started up again in 1946. In 1945 André Malraux, minister of culture, revived the idea of legislating financial support for art films, which had been state policy in Germany since 1921, only to be rejected again.

The beginning of the fifties was an important moment in the institutionalization of the art film. Besides the renewal of the Venice Film Festival in 1946, half a dozen new international film festivals were launched in Europe within four years: Cannes, Locarno, and Karlovy Vary (1946), Edinburgh (1947), and Biarritz and Berlin (1950). In 1950 the federation of the French film critics established its own art-movie theater network, beginning with the Reflet 23 theater and followed by five other theaters: Lord Byron, Studio de l'Etoile, Caumartin, Agriculteurs, and Cinéma des Champs-Elysées. At the same time in Germany, there were already fifty theaters that were incorporated in 1953 in the Gilde Deutscher Filmkunstteater. In France the network of film clubs was restarted as early as 1944 by a film critic named Pierre Kast, future editor of the *Cahiers du cinéma* and French new wave di-

40. Monaco, *Cinema and Society*.

41. Originally, the Cannes Film Festival was conceived to politically counter the fascist influence prevailing at the 1938 Venice Biennale. For the history of the Cannes Film Festival, see Paul Leglise, *Histoire de la politique du cinéma français* (Paris: Pierre L'herminier Editeur, 1969–1977), 195.

rector, and an international association of film clubs was founded in 1947. Also in 1947 the preparations began for the creation of the Italian Federation of Cinema Circles (FICC), and the federation was officially constituted in 1950. According to its constitution the cinema circles were "absolutely apolitical, nonprofit associations whose main goal is the development and the spread of film culture. . . . They want to promote the development of film culture, historical studies, the technique of film art, promote the development of the cultural exchange in the domain of cinema of different nations, and encourage experimental filmmaking."[42] Emphasis on the intellectual underpinnings of art cinema was not missing either. *Cahiers du cinéma* and *Cinema nuovo,* the two most important intellectual film magazines in Europe, were launched in 1951. *Positif,* another important French magazine, hit the stands in 1952. Throughout the fifties and sixties these would be the most influential forums for European art cinema.

In 1952 the Fédération International des Auteurs de Film (International Federation of Film Authors) was founded at the Cannes Film Festival. This was the first international institution to openly describe the antagonism between art cinema and film entertainment as an institutional problem. In their statements one can feel the pride and the self-consciousness of an institutional power:

> Defending their essential rights, film auteurs do not want to defend just their own destiny, but also the destiny of the cinema, which by becoming a servant would stop being an art, and would deserve only the name of an industry. Protecting their own freedom, film auteurs will protect the cinema, its original virtues, its cultural and social function, its high mission. . . . Thanks to us, the cinema is an art.[43]

It is worth pointing out that American film "auteurs" participated at this meeting only as "observers" not as prospective members.

In 1954 French art-film theater owners wanted to create an association but failed because of the reluctance of the French film critics' association to give up the independence of the theaters they owned. However, when in 1955 the German national federation called for an international association of art-film theaters, the French film critics decided to offer their theaters to participate, and thus a French national association was born, which became a member of the International Confederation of Art-Film Theaters estab-

42. Gian Piero Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano dal 1945 agli anni ottanta* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1982), 188.

43. "Procès verbale de la Fédération Internationale de Auters de Films," May 2, 3, 4 1952, p. 12, Magyar Nemzeti Filmarchivum.

lished on July 21, 1955. Two years later, at last, financial support for French art-film theaters became a reality. By the second half of the fifties, the art film in Europe was more than a theory, a prospect, or a critical category—it had become a strong institution backed by tax laws, professional associations, production and distribution networks, film festivals, and prestigious magazines.

Modernist Art Cinema and the Avant-Garde

Is the distinction between modernism and avant-garde a valid issue in the cinema? In film historiography, there are two other labels for the type of film usually identified with the "avant-garde": experimental and underground. Very often these tags function as collective names designating the same film practice. In general, in French terminology "experimental cinema" is used to designate noncommercial films whose main concern is not to tell a story or to represent a piece of "real life" but to concentrate on and exploit the possibilities of the formal aspects of the cinematic medium. Theoretician of cinema Jean Mitry, for example, includes in this category all films—from those of Georges Méliès to German expressionism, from Clair to Sergei Eisenstein, from Walter Ruttman to Norman MacLaren, from Gregory Markopoulos to Godard—that display a degree of this approach regardless of genre or style, but he does not make any distinction within this category.[44] Conversely, in American historiography "avant-garde" is used as a general term for alternative, commercial, non-narrative film practice. The third label, "underground," is mainly used to refer to the American avant-garde of the sixties, but no essential difference is defined between underground and avant-garde films of other periods. It is safe to say that these terms—avant-garde, experimental, and underground—have fairly similar meanings in designating a particular film practice. However, each reveals a different aspect of the same practice. Non-narrative fictional practice in the cinema is most often structurally determined (thus experimental), it is often personal and based on alternative production and distribution networks (thus underground), and it is sometimes political (thus avant-garde in the traditional sense). The avant-garde label is most justified with respect to phenomena that brutally challenge conventional aesthetic taste and can be considered as the expansion of avant-garde artistic movements, as in Dadaism and surrealism. Also, there is no doubt about Vertov's being an avant-garde filmmaker in the political sense—while most artists of the "pure cinema" or

44. Jean Mitry, *Le cinéma expérimental. Histoire et perspectives* (Paris: Seghers, 1974).

the "absolute film" movement should be more correctly called experimental rather than avant-garde filmmakers.

It seems that Bazin defined the most relevant features of the avant-garde/experimental practice once and for all. In his view, the avant-garde in the cinema before the thirties had a fairly precise meaning:

> Between 1924 and 1930, what was called avant-garde had a precise, unambiguous sense. Not complying with the requirements of commercial cinema, avant-garde was aimed only at a restricted audience, which it tried to make accept the cinematic experiences that were in more than one aspect comparable with the experiments in painting and literature of the time.[45]

Avant-garde is a personalized, noncommerical, non-narrative, and reductive use of the medium that, in most cases, is related to other art forms, such as painting, music, or poetry. Twenty years later, Sheldon Renan still uses the same criteria for a definition of the underground:

> The underground film *is* a certain kind of film. It is a film conceived and made essentially by one person and is a *personal statement* by that person. It is a film that dissents radically in form, or in technique, or in content, or perhaps in all three. It is usually made for very little money, frequently under a thousand dollars, and its exhibition is outside commercial film channels. The term "underground film" belongs to the sixties, but the personal film is not a new phenomenon. It goes back almost to the beginning of film, a seventy-year tradition that has had many names, underground being only the latest. This contemporary manifestation, however, is of a greater magnitude than any before. . . . The commercial film is a medium of and for bankers, craftsmen, film crews, and audiences. The underground film is a medium of and for the individual, as explorer and as artist.[46]

Renan's approach concentrates more on the institutional aspect of the avant-garde. But that reflects only the changes resulted in the institutional system of the cinema by 1960. The large availability of cheap and easy-to-handle filmmaking equipment on the one hand, and the large and rigid institutionalized Hollywood production system on the other, made clear that underground opposed Hollywood first of all in the sense of being alternative filmmaking practice. As Jonas Mekas put it, "Now cinema is available not to those who possess a high organizational and group-work talent, but also to those poets who are more sensitive, but often un-communal, who pre-

45. Cited by Antoine de Baecque, *Les cahiers du cinéma: Histoire d'une revue*, vol. 1, *A l'assaut du cinéma, 1951–1959* (Paris: Éditions Cahiers du cinéma, 1991), 42.

46. Sheldon Renan, *An Introduction to the American Underground Film* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1967), 17–18, emphasis in the original.

fer privacy, whose powers of observation and imagination are most active in privacy."[47] It was not very long though, before American underground cinema created its own alternative filmmaking institutions, such as the Creative Film Society (1957), the Film-Makers' Cooperative (1962), and the Charles Theater (1959). As a cinematic practice, avant-garde/underground/experimental filmmaking is always aimed at private, self-expressive use of the cinema. It is the laboratory of the audio-visual medium, a formal experiment more or less inspired by modern painting and literature, distributed in a noncommercial circuit, for a restricted audience. That is what always aligns the avant-garde with the arts and literature. It rejects cinema as a commercial institution but affirms it as a personal form of artistic expression whereby all kinds of artistic trends and movements can find their way to the cinema.

Some approaches extend the validity of the avant-garde label beyond the noncommercial practice. As discussed above, Mitry did not restrict this category to films aimed at a small audience, which allowed him to include German expressionism, nor to films that relate to the artistic avant-garde, which allowed him to mention documentary filmmakers such as Robert Flaherty. Dominique Noguez also considers that the experimental cinema is a fundamentally and essentially formalistic enterprise, but does not refer to it as a practice.[48] Peter Wollen, on the other hand, claims that there are two kinds of avant-garde cinema. One is purely formalistic, the other is political.[49] Filmmakers like Eisenstein, Miklós Jancsó, or Godard are avant-garde filmmakers not only by virtue of their formal innovations but also by the political stances expressed in their films. Wollen tends to extend the notion of the avant-garde the same way Mitry does, basically toward modern narrative art film, but recognizes the importance of the difference between noncommercial formal experimentalism and a politically informed narrative practice.[50]

Clearly two important differences must be taken into account. On the one hand there is the difference between a non-narrative, noncommercial practice and a radical, mostly politically engaged narrative practice (the difference between the two avant-gardes); on the other hand there is the dif-

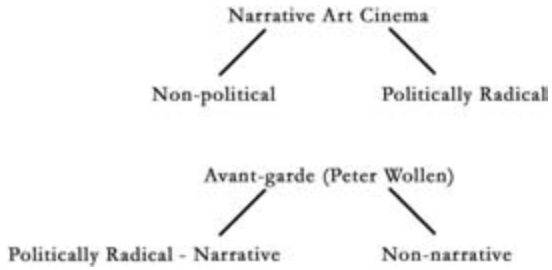
47. Jonas Mekas, "Notes on the New American Cinema," in *Film Culture* (1962): 8–9.

48. See Dominique Noguez, *Eloge du cinéma expérimentale* (Paris: Centre George Pompidou, 1979).

49. Peter Wollen in *The British Avant-Garde Film, 1926–1995,* ed. Michael O'Pray (Luton: University of Luton Press, 1996), 133–134.

50. Noted that Bazin wanted to extend the restricted category of the early avant-garde to new narrative art films.

ference between a commercial, classical narrative practice and the avant-garde (either kind). We could represent these distinctions in the following scheme:



Eisenstein, Godard, Jancsó, Jean-Marie Straub, and Danièle Huillet certainly do not represent a private film practice, they are not outside of the commercial film circuit, and even if they interpret narrative in a very extreme manner, narrative remains a fundamental part of their films. Wollen's claim to call them avant-garde is essentially based on their strong leftist political leanings together with their radically unconventional use of the narrative form. Political engagement as the basis of the avant-garde quality is of course not an unjustifiable claim. In art history, all distinctions (if any) between modernism and avant-garde emphasize that the latter is an extreme, radical form of the former. The distinction most art historians agree on involves the self-reflective, essentially aesthetic character of modernism and the aggressive, anti-aesthetic, political character of the avant-garde. This distinction does not hold in the film context, however; the political component there splits its avant-garde in two rather than crystallizing it in opposition to something defined as modernism. Moreover, what distinguishes the artistic avant-garde from artistic modernism is in turn not the distinctive feature of the "mainstream" cinematic avant-garde. The important difference between what is commonly called the avant-garde/experimental movements in film and the avant-garde of fine arts is that the former is *not* a typically political movement.

The cinematic avant-garde cannot be seen in any way as a "politically radical" continuation of an alleged "abstract cinematic modernism" that preceded it and that engendered its basic abstract forms. The emergence of abstraction in cinema was not a gradual process during which abstract forms had pushed realist forms out of the way until film arrived at a totally abstract avant-garde. Modernist narrative film and abstract avant-garde were two manifestations of the same process appearing simultaneously in 1919: German expressionism on the one hand, and the abstract studies of

Hans Richter on the other. The abstract avant-garde was a parallel phenomenon with the modernist art film all through the twenties; it had in its sight the exploration of the medium's capability of visual abstraction. This interest went beyond the mainstream (classical and modernist) film practice by entirely suppressing the narrative structure, making room for abstract compositional principles, but not out of a radical aesthetic or political motivation.

Obviously, anti-aesthetic politics is not missing entirely from classical avant-garde films. The radical avant-garde movements, Dada and surrealism, discovered the avant-garde potential of the cinema, first in 1924 when Dadaists Picabia and Clair inspired the cinema with their film *Entr'acte*. That was the first film that provoked audience animosity for its avant-garde radicalism when it was screened at the Théatre des Champs-Élysées.[51] Larger scandals followed responding to the influence of surrealism in film,[52] testifying to the presence of the avant-garde's political motivation. However, these relatively late and sporadic developments of cinematic avant-garde in the twenties constituted neither its beginning nor its mainstream. The mainstream of early and later avant-garde for that matter was noted for its *private artistic* use of the cinema rather than any political use. The avant-garde in the cinema did not go against any aesthetic tradition, for *tradition was not an enemy for early avant-garde filmmakers*, simply because there was no artistic tradition in the cinema to renounce. On the contrary, tradition primarily meant aesthetic canonization, and that is what early filmmakers wished more than anything to achieve. Early avant-garde film was an initiative to make cinema accepted as a practice of full aesthetic value. In that, it even meant following some of the traditions of primitive cinema. As Clair put it, "If we want to increase the power of cinema, we have to respect the forgotten traditions, we have to return to this source."[53]

On the other hand, large-scale political and artistic provocation emerged in the narrative art cinema in the second half of the 1960s—that is, when the canonization of cinema as a cultural form had been achieved and already

51. Cf. René Clair, *Cinéma d'hier, cinéma d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 28.

52. The most noteworthy was the scandal on the presentation of Buñuel's *Age of Gold* in 1930. A little bit more than a month after the release of the film, in Paris in the Studio 28 cinema, on December 3, 1930, a group of extreme right-wing activist (members of the Patriotic League and the Anti-Jewish League) threw smoke bombs in the theater and damaged the screen. As right-wing press attacks continued, French censorship banned the film a week later. Adonis Kyrou, *Le surréalisme au cinéma* (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, 1963), 217–218.

53. René Clair, *Reflexion faite* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951).

accumulated traditions could be attacked and declared "classical" and "conservative." Again, the non-narrative avant-garde or underground cinema was not characterized by a political agenda. As Renan put it, political activism was still "in a minority" in the underground of the sixties.[54] Hence the main aspect of avant-garde cinema was as yet unchanged since the twenties. The most politicized and provocative artists in late modern cinema, such as Godard, Buñuel, Dušan Makavejev, Straub, and Huillet in Europe and Russ Meyer, Paul Morrissey, and John Waters in the United States, all worked on the margins of narrative-film practice. They attacked mainstream narrative film from inside the institution of narrative art cinema. The main underground avant-garde artists of the late modernist period, such as Michael Snow, Andy Warhol, Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas, and—despite their cult of homosexuality—even Jack Smith or Kenneth Anger issued no provocation whatsoever toward the institutions of mainstream cinema.

The distinction between an "aesthetic" modernism and an "antiaesthetic," political avant-garde, which is so relevant in art history, seems unsuited to the cinema. Avant-garde/experimental/underground cinema is a specific cinematic practice that may or may not include a political component. It differs from classical cinema as well as from modernist art cinema precisely by virtue of the difference of its practice. Virtually all verbal proclamations of avant-garde filmmakers show a lesser or greater amount of hostility toward commercial filmmaking. It opposes not just the Hollywood-type film industry but the European art-film industry as well, since both are based on narrative fiction. The avant-garde practice opposes fictional narrative, and this opposition only seldom translates into political terms.

54. Renan, *An Introduction to the American Underground Film*, 27.

:2:

Theories of the Classical/Modern Distinction in the Cinema

Understanding modern cinema historically means understanding how it differs from its counterpart, nonmodern or classical narrative (art) cinema. This chapter gives an overview of the typical distinction between classical and modern cinema. This overview will suggest some basic principles to use as we begin to construct the stylistic-historical aspect of cinematic modernism.

The notion of modern cinema spread through the ranks of filmmakers, film critics, and "ordinary" film viewers since the late fifties. The use of the concept reflects the three aspects of the "classical/modern" dichotomy discussed in chapter 1: modern cinema as the new versus the old/classical; modern cinema as the actual and valid form of cinema versus invalid cinema; and modern cinema as an aesthetic variation of the classical.

We can also find various combinations of these oppositions in different approaches. In the history of film theory the combination of these aspects has crystallized in two main patterns of theorizing cinematic modernism. One depicts modernism as the result of the aesthetic and technical evolution of the cinema while the other considers it as an alternative stylistic movement appearing in different forms in certain moments of film history. In other words, the main demarcation between approaches to modern cinema separates those who treat it as an outcome of an aesthetic, stylistic, or intellectual evolution and those who see it as a specific combination of aesthetic/stylistic choices, whether or not some of these in fact come out of technical or stylistic innovations. Both views have been present simultaneously in film criticism right from the early 1950s.

Theoreticians of the first group, whom I will call "evolutionists," contend that modern cinema represents a higher degree of development of cine-

matic form (language) and—even if they acknowledge the values of classical cinema—they consider modern film as more capable of expressing abstract ideas. It is their conviction therefore that modernism surpassed classical cinema. Theoreticians of the latter group, whom I will call "style analysts," on the other hand hold that modernism is a stylistic and/or ideological alternative to classical filmmaking, whether they mean by classical a premodern form or a surviving standard norm. Both groups claim that modernism is a historical phenomenon, but their views diverge as to what constitutes modernism's "modernity." Evolutionists hold that modern cinema (the one-time new-as-opposed-to-the-classical) is always "modern," that is, actual and valid. Style analysts propose, on the contrary, that modernism is a kind of "film practice" related to certain periods of film history, therefore it is not necessarily "modern" (i.e., new, actual) all the time. French philosopher Gilles Deleuze stands at one end of this scale. For him, modernism in cinema is not a style, nor even an artistic movement. It is the actualization of a capacity of the cinema to represent a certain way of thinking. This capacity was only virtually present in prewar cinema and became actualized only after the Second World War. The opposite stance to this kind of philosophical theorizing of modernism is represented by David Bordwell's approach: modernism is an international stylistic movement, born as a reaction to mainstream Hollywood cinema, which prevailed in European filmmaking during the 1960s.[1] In what follows, I will review the main arguments of these conceptions to provide some basis for my own historical approach.

Style Analysts

At the turn of the 1940s-1950s, it became a widely accepted view, especially among some French critics, that a new way of filmmaking was rearing its head in America and Europe. The classical-modern dichotomy was quickly applied to demarcate these new tendencies. However, some of these critics—later to become filmmakers of the French new wave—did not think of "classical" as an outmoded, dust-covered filmmaking practice. On the contrary, their enthusiasm for American films provided them with a rather nuanced notion of classicism. They acknowledged the importance of cin-

1. And, as he puts it in his history of film written with Kristin Thompson, "in certain respects . . . [it] marks a resurgence of the modernist impulses of the 1920s. . . . In other ways, though, postwar filmmakers forged a revised modernism suitable to the sound cinema." Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, *Film History: An Introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 412.

ematic traditions even in comparison to modern forms. As film critics, they did not advocate a total break with all traditional cinematic practices but looked for traditions that were worthy enough to be continued. Later on, when their own filmmaking practice turned out to be in fact rather subversive, they still declined to claim a break with old cinema as such. All they did was to single out certain tendencies and auteurs they accepted as their precursors or mentors and rejected others as outmoded. That is how Alfred Hitchcock, Fritz Lang, Roberto Rossellini, and Howard Hawks became cult figures for the French new wave. Classical and modern were not value judgments for the new wave critics. As a matter of fact, they did not consider "classical" and "modern" as necessarily opposing categories.

Eric Rohmer and Godard, the two main critics for the *Cahiers du cinéma*, theorized on the distinction between "classical" and "modern." They supported an idea originating from Charles Baudelaire about the relativity of the distinction between classical and modern. According to Rohmer, the modern character of the cinema is its capacity to represent the physical world as it is, in its "stupid" banality. That is why cinema is the only form of art that can really render contemporary reality. And at the same time, cinema is a classic art because it can spiritualize the things it represents according to the ideal of beauty. More than that, cinema takes over the role of classical poetry:

> Film possesses the pleasure of the metaphorical power, whose secret poetry has lost, and that is why the most recent art is classical poetry's only legitimate refuge. . . . The poets are unable to accept into their metaphorical world these fabricated objects, which the modern world has made our company at every moment.[2]

At the same time, Rohmer considers cinema as a modern art form in its entirety and thus understands cinema as modern in the sense of being a valid form of art, unlike classical poetry, which is no longer valid. However, within the realm of cinema, classical and modern do not represent two opposing camps but rather go hand in hand. Cinema as a form of representation is modern because it renders modern reality, but as an art form it has to be classical. And in this respect, according to Rohmer, cinema has not yet reached its classical era: "Classicism is not behind, but ahead."[3] That is, solid aesthetic norms of the cinema are still to be established, and therefore

2. Cited by Antoine de Baecque, *Les cahiers du cinéma: Histoire d'un revue* (Paris: Diffusion, Seuil, 1991) 1: 226.

3. Eric Rohmer, "L'âge classique du cinéma," *Combat* (15 June 1949).

classicism is not something outmoded, but—to use Baudelaire's words—the necessary "half of the art."

Godard also speaks of the "relativity of classicism" in one of his early articles, "Défense et illustration du découpage classique." He already makes a distinction between a classical and a modern cinema, but far from preferring modern to classical, he defends certain aspects of classical cinema against what he calls modern "anticinema" epitomized by the *Macbeth* of Orson Welles (1948) or *Diary of a Country Priest* of Robert Bresson (1950). This is all the more remarkable since from the late sixties through the mid-seventies Godard himself became the emblematic figure of a certain anticinema movement; moreover, both Welles and Bresson were auteurs celebrated by the new wave. Nevertheless, in his 1952 article Godard still emphasizes the importance of setting new rules for the classical time-space articulation (découpage), which in his opinion was far from regaining the height of development it attained before the war.[4]

The important point here is not that Godard (or other new wave critics, for that matter) respects his elders but that he accepts certain filmmaking practices as classical and denounces others as modern. In this early essay, classical and modern are not absolute values but rather are interchangeable notions that serve to canonize new forms of classical narrative cinema. The classicism of modernity and the modernity of classicism—this idea was so important for Godard that he returned to it from time to time later in his filmmaking career. For example, in *Band of Outsiders* (1964), for no apparent reason an English teacher writes on the blackboard "classique = moderne," and cites T. S. Eliot as saying that "all that is new is by that fact automatically classical."

It is implicit in Godard's conception that classical and modern relate to each other as the practices of respecting or creating rules and refusing or breaking them, respectively. The scholarly elaboration of this approach makes explicit the conception according to which classical and modern (as a derivative of the classical) are two different types of cinematic prac-

4. "Certainly, one only has to examine the evolution of one of the greatest American artists, Howard Hawks, to see how relative the notion of classicism is . . . what can one see? An increasing taste for analysis, a love for this artificial greatness linked to eye movements, to a way of marching, in short, a knowledge about what the cinema can be proud of, and not the abuse of that, which leads to the anticinema (like in Orson Welles's *Macbeth* or Robert Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest*). On the contrary, this is a knowledge of the limits of and a skill for fixing the essential rules." Godard, "Défense et illustration du découpage classique" *Cahiers du cinéma* 15 (September 1952), reprinted in *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1998), 1: 84.

tice pertaining to different moments of film history. For example, David Bordwell in his *Narration in the Fiction Film* not only considers classical film narration as being classical because it precedes modern film narration, but he also treats it as the standard and most widespread narrative mode to which modern art-cinema narration opposes its rule-breaking methods. He analyzes modern narration as something that deviates from a set of norms established in the 1930s by the Hollywood studio system: "Art-cinema narration has become a coherent mode partly by defining itself as a deviation from classical narrative." Bordwell's characterization of modern narration consists many times in negative statements, such as "[in art-film narration] the suzhet [plot] is not as redundant as in the classical film; . . . exposition is delayed; . . . the narration tends to be less generically motivated."[5] Bordwell does not entirely discount modern cinema when compared to the classical norm—in fact, he gives equal weight to the classical and the modernist forms—but he holds that the modernist forms are derived from classical cinema.[6] According to Bordwell, modern cinema became institutionalized as an "international art cinema" in the 1960s just like classical Hollywood cinema did in the 1930s. For this reason it is appropriate to speak about two equivalent cinematic practices.

There is a more radical version of this approach formulated by Noël Burch, who dedicated a whole book to show the stylistic, technical, and narrative elements of 1960s modernism that subverted classical cinematic rules, that is to say, the institutional mode of representation (IMR).[7] Although Burch's opinion of IMR is highly critical, his conception implies that the classical form is not an invalid, outmoded, surpassed practice, but something that is always carried on and developed, and opposed, in each period by a modernist counterpoint characteristic of that given period. Modernist form here does not mean a more developed, mature, or more advanced film practice, but only a different, critical, and subversive one. Burch does not treat the notion of modernism as a historical period that follows the classical but rather

5. David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), quotations on 228, 205, and in particular the chapters "Art Cinema Narration" and "Parametric Narration."

6. In the last chapter of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge, 1985), 378–385, Bordwell and Janet Staiger already explicitly call attention to the dangers of a conception of modern cinema as a simple derivative of the Hollywood film.

7. Noël Burch, *Praxis du cinéma* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969); translated as *Theory of Film Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

as a mode of representation that coexists (after 1919) with the classical—which it disturbs, opposes, and deconstructs.

Evolutionists

At the same time, many film historians and critics did not stop at the notion that modern cinema was a radically new and different way of making films but went on to hold it as superior to the old, outmoded, and invalid forms. This view, very much like that of the "modern" French poets of the seventeenth century, holds that modern cinema is simply more developed, and technically, aesthetically, and theoretically more capable than the old one. This superiority was often expressed through the metaphor of maturity and adulthood, which underlined even more emphatically the element of an evolution in the concepts of film form. Here is an example from a run-of-the-mill review about Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'avventura* (*The Adventure*, 1961):

> A certain anachronistic cinema is dead. Or rather it continues to survive, but together with another cinema, which is as alien to it as *À la recherche de temps perdu* is to *Caroline chérie*. During the last years, languages and conventions were undermined by certain young film authors of the French cinema, and already accomplished works by Ingmar Bergman, Alain Resnais, and Michelangelo Antonioni also appeared. Here is one of those accomplished works. Here is a great example of what could be called a grown-up cinema.[8]

Although critical enthusiasm is not the best standpoint for developing scholarly categories and firm theoretical stances, this passage clearly shows how "new" and "old" become value judgments when used in an evolutionary sense and coupled with the idea of "maturity" or "adulthood."

The idea of cinema's aesthetic and intellectual adulthood or maturity appears explicitly in film theory for the first time in Alexandre Astruc's conception of the development of film language. Astruc elaborated his ideas in several articles in 1948, which became important theoretical starting points of modernism in the sixties and seventies.[9] Astruc's point is that film has to be raised to the same level of intellectual expression as literature and drama. Cinema's development elevates it from the state of "spectacle" to the state of "language." But his "language" of the cinema does not have anything to do with linguistics. Astruc is not a precursor of the 1960s semiological move-

8. *Le Soir*, 24 March 1961, on the occasion of the Belgium release of *L'avventura*.

9. Alexandre Astruc, "Naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde: Le caméra-stylo," *L'Écran français* 144 (30 March 1948), idem, "L'avenir du cinéma," *La Nef* 48 (November 1948), and idem, "Notes sur Orson Welles," *La table ronde* 2 (February 1948).

ment. For him, cinema is not a language by nature, neither in a linguistic nor in an aesthetic sense. For cinema, becoming a language is the goal of its intellectual development. Here "language" is merely the medium of conceptual expression. The cinema, Astruc says, does not have a future, if this future is not that of the camera's becoming a "fountain pen." "The language of the cinema is not that of fiction, nor that of the documentary, but that of the essay."[10] In other words, film is no less of an intellectual practice than essay writing, or even philosophy, and becoming equal to philosophy is cinema's only possible destiny. Cinema must become the expression of abstract thoughts but with different tools:

> Today, Descartes would lock himself up in his room together with a 16 mm camera and some film stock, and would write his *Discours de la méthode* on film, for today his *Discours de la méthode* would be such that only cinema could give it adequate expression.[11]

So, film's future is guaranteed only if it becomes capable of expressing abstract ideas—and only when film in fact becomes a language in this sense, could it be called a "mature" art. "An art does not come to maturity unless it finds a way whereby the expressed goes beyond expression."[12] Maturity of film then included essay-like, philosophical film "writing" in which the written and the filmed text are different from each other only by virtue of their respective materials, but not by their expressive and intellectual power.

This conception is rather close to Bazin's ideas; Astruc, however, is more radical. Bazin used the term "language" with respect to cinema as a metaphor of "a specific system of artistic expression." That is what he means when, at the end of his seminal essay "Ontology of Photography" he contends, "We have to consider cinema as a language." Astruc by turn claims that cinema has yet to become a language. Also, Bazin did not try to restrict cinema's future to one possible course of evolution, even if he thought that the direction in which cinema would develop was staked out by its enhanced power to represent reality. Bazin was more like a film historian or a film critic who tried to predict future developments of the cinema, whereas Astruc was rather like an ideologist of a particular movement. We could say that on Bazinian grounds, Astruc developed a radical doctrine of the intellectual avant-garde cinema. If Astruc's idea of the "caméra-stylo" relates to anything, it is the theoretical precursor of textual analysis and the notion of cinematic "écriture" of the late sixties and early seventies. This approach

10. Astruc, "L'avenir du cinéma."
11. Astruc, "Naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde."
12. Ibid.

reiterates the equivalence of the written and the filmed "text" and gives it a large theoretical framework.[13]

Astruc does not use the word "modern" to name the sort of cinema deserving the label of "language," but he obviously has in mind a "new," "more developed," "mature" cinema. Nevertheless, his calling this new cinema "a new avant-garde" and not simply "modern" is quite meaningful. Apparently, he makes no distinction between the two terms, but if one compares the "caméra-stylo" theory to other ideas about modernism, it is clear that Astruc's doctrine of the "caméra-stylo" is the very first appearance of a theoretical point of view in which the classical-modern opposition as a value conflict points toward its extreme development: the experimental avant-garde film of the late sixties and seventies.[14]

Modern Cinema and Deleuze

By far the deepest and most developed theory of modern cinema has been formulated by Gilles Deleuze in his controversial books on film.[15] This

13. See Jean-Louis Bodry, "Writing, Fiction, Ideology," *Afterimage* 5 (Spring 1974).

14. It is quite common not to distinguish sufficiently the notion of "caméra-stylo" from other conceptions of authorship in the cinema, especially that of the French new wave. However close the two conceptions may seem to be, it is important to note the essential difference between them. While the common ground for both is the distinguished role attributed to the author's personality, they are very different with respect to authorial methods. Astruc's theory sets up a methodological doctrine of an intellectual, subjective, anti-industrial filmmaking, whereas *la politique des auteurs* refuses to distinguish any filmmaking practice. An "author" may work with any kind of genre technique, or subject matter, but his/her personal "signature" should be recognizable throughout. Intellectualism and the expression of abstract thoughts are not necessary features of an "author's" works. The reason for the fusion of these conceptions can be found in the evolution of the modern cinema during the 1960s and 1970s. As will be discussed below, international modern cinema did not share the French new wave's initial enthusiasm for American film genres; rather, it developed according to the intellectual "film writing" conception set up by Astruc. Thus, "caméra-stylo" practice simply became identified with film authorship. For the distinction of the two conceptions, see Claire Clouzot, *Le cinéma français depuis la nouvelle vague* ([Paris]: Fernand Nathan, 1972). For the origins of author theory, see Anne Gillain, ed., *Le cinéma selon François Truffaut* ([Paris]: Flammarion, 1988). And for a detailed explanation of the concept and the debates around it, see de Baecque, *Les cahiers du cinéma*, 1: 147–179.

15. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma*, vol. 1, *L'image-mouvement*, vol. 2, *L'image-temps* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1983-1985). For an English translation, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone Press, 1985), and

theory does not fit in with any previous theoretical frameworks. Deleuze constructs his categories based on his own philosophical system. However original and stunning his theoretical ideas on image, sign, and film form may seem, his notions on film history recognizably follow the Bazinian and partly the Astrucian views about the evolution of film form. No wonder that in the Deleuzian approach to modern cinema one can find all three aspects of the classical-modern dichotomy. He sets out a systematic distinction between classical and modern cinema, whereby modern cinema is seen as a different utilization of moving images. He also sets up a chronological order whereby modern cinema appears as an organic development of classical cinema. Finally, he puts modern cinema on a higher level of evolution where cinema fulfills its potential for expressing abstract thoughts.[16] According to Deleuze, modern cinema is the most developed structural variation of classical cinema, which articulates the actual world better and in a deeper sense than classical cinema. "Classical" does not mean for Deleuze an "everlasting," eternal model of aesthetic value. Not that he does not respect and admire classical auteurs, but he considers classical film form to be outmoded, passé, invalid, discredited. Although Deleuze designates a certain historical moment for the appearance of modern cinema, he does not treat modernism as an art-historical phenomenon in the sense of an art movement, trend, or school. Modern film is the result of the evolution of cinema's inherent power of articulating time.

The difference between classical and modern cinema, Deleuze believes, is to be found in their respective treatment of movement and time. Classical cinema articulates time through movement. It creates an organic system in which perception and action are summed up in a mental quality, which he calls "affection." This is the emergence of subjectivity in the image. The connectedness of perception and action through affection (which takes place in the interstices between the two) is the basis of a space-time unity in which time is located by a determined space, and space is defined through a chronological ordering of time. In other words, classical cinema has its roots in traditional storytelling where a continuous time-frame and a delimited space segment are the bases of the unity of action. Deleuze calls this unity the "sensory-motor circuit," by which he means that in classical cinema

---

Cinema 2: The Time Image, trans. by Hugh Tomlison and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone Press, 1989).

16. "The direct time-image is the phantom which has always haunted the cinema, but it took modern cinema to give a body to this phantom." Deleuze, *Time Image*, 59.

perception is automatically followed by an action or an action by a reaction. In modern cinema the "sensory-motor circuit" is broken, perceptions not followed by action acquire independent value. Modern cinema works with "pure optical and sound situations," which means that the images we see in modern film are not supposed to imply any imminent action. Perceptions are not controlled by the logic of action but rather by internal mental processes. It is not the logic of storytelling that is revealed by the sequence of images of modern films but the way mental states and forms (e.g., thoughts, dreams, and phantasms) come into being. Since this becoming is separated from physical action, which therefore does not regulate the time of the mental procedures, in modern cinema time stands before us in its purest state, through its mental formations. Historical time, time of action in classical cinema becomes "transcendental" time, time of mental procedures in modern cinema. If classical cinema is an organic system because of the unity of action and reaction, modern cinema is a "crystalline structure" because the "crystals of time"—that is, the articulated mental procedures—are linked to one another by endless variation and multiplication. Modern cinema for Deleuze is the best representation of thinking in the contemporary world.

Modern cinema does not represent a physical world but a mental image of the world on the basis of a belief that this is an existing world. Modern cinema does not say that the world is in a bad way and in need of improvement or that certain representations of the world are incorrect or false. The way modern cinema represents the world is as false as any other mode of representation. Any image of the physical reality necessarily contradicts the mental reality of our times, that is, we cannot believe that things exist as we see them. The specificity of modern cinema takes into consideration this mental reality—not a critique of reality, but a mental correction of the illusion of physical representation. The falsity of physical representation and the mental substitution of physical links become central elements in modern cinema.

One can see that Deleuze's conception is as ideologically based as those of Burch. Deleuze says that cinematic representation is not false right at the outset; Burch holds that traditional representation after 1919 has been continuously falsified and invalidated. Deleuze claims that modern cinema is the expression of the modern condition and denies that modern cinema ended in the 1970s with the decline of the ideological critique of capitalism. For him, modern cinema is in no way history but actual reality. And in that lies all the difference between Deleuze and the ideologists of modernism. Unlike Burch, Deleuze does not look for the roots of modern film form in the critique of bourgeois ideological representation. For Deleuze, the essence

of modern cinema is not its otherwise undeniable critical function. Its main role is not to deconstruct or criticize classical forms and their underlying ideology.

> It is not enough for the victory, to parody the cliché, to make holes in it and empty it. It is not enough to disturb the sensory-motor connections. It is necessary to *combine* the optical-sound image with the enormous forces that are not those of a simply intellectual consciousness, nor of the social one, but of a profound, vital intuition.[17]

He attributes to modern cinema an affirmative function: *modern cinema is a mental substitute for the lost link between man and the world.* Its function is to reconstruct positive mental relations to an already alienated reality by a "profound vital intuition." The role of modern cinema is to make us "believe, not in a different world, but in a link between man and the world, in love or life, to believe in this as in the impossible, the unthinkable, which nonetheless cannot but be thought."

> The modern fact is that we no longer believe in this world. We do not even believe in the events which happen to us, love, death, as if they only half concerned us. . . . The link between man and the world is broken. Henceforth, this link must become an object of belief: it is the impossible which can only be restored within a faith. . . . The cinema must film, not the world, but belief in this world, our only link. . . . Restoring our belief in the world—this is the power of modern cinema.[18]

The break between man and the world can be resolved only in a mental dimension, and modern cinema's forms represent different *virtual* solutions to human alienation without ever crossing the borderline that separates art from actual social or political reality. However, that was not always the case. Cinema did not always lack the revolutionary thrust: "Christian faith and revolutionary faith were the two poles which attracted the art of the masses. For the cinematographic image, in contrast to the theater, showed us the link between the man and the world."[19] According to Deleuze, these two poles still exist, but they have passed into the third world, while "the crucial point" (i.e., the link between man and the world) has disappeared. In other words, even the most revolutionary third world cinema cannot avoid

17. Deleuze, *Time Image*, 22, emphasis in the original. The translation of the first sentence is erroneous in the English edition.

18. Deleuze, *Time Image*, quotations on 170, 171.

19. Deleuze, *Time Image*, 171.

the consequences of modern alienation, and it cannot alter the substantial falsity of modern cinematic representation.

All this makes Deleuze stand out as an original theorist of modern cinema. In spite of his clearly leftist and anticapitalist inclinations, he does not belong with the large group of film theorists who consider modern cinema from the aspect of political critique. Modern cinema for Deleuze is neither a negation, nor a critique of classical cinema but the dismantling and the virtual reconstruction of human relationships, which in classical cinema was represented as an actual and physical reality. That is what he calls the "restored belief in the world through mental constructions." He defines modern cinema not from the point of view of its relationship to the classical, but from its relation to the present and its perspective in the future. And this is why he does not see an end to modern cinema. If the function of modern cinema is to make us believe in the world, it will last as long as this function, in other words, until the modern condition changes. For Deleuze, every film, which reflects on the break between man and the world by substituting the physical link by a virtual mental form, is modern. His modernity is not Greenberg's escapism; it is much closer to postmodernism's cult of the virtual.

The conclusion that follows from all this is that while the style-analyst approach supposes an important difference between what is called modern cinema (a new and actual cinema of any time), and modernist cinema, that is, a cinematic trend displaying certain stylistic and narrative characteristics, evolutionists have a single and synthetic idea about modern cinema, since they do not distinguish between *modern* and *modernist* cinema.

Modernism as an Unfinished Project

In *Cinema and Modernity*,[20] John Orr claims that modern poetics of the cinema has remained unchallenged since the 1960s and that "postmodern" cinema continued to use the formal devices invented by early and late modernism. In this perspective modernism could be regarded as an "unfinished project." This is a crucial point, since if cinematic modernism were something that survives other modernisms, cinema should be considered as a unique phenomenon among the arts. Either we would have to say that for some reason, modernism in the cinema lasts fifteen to thirty years longer than it did in literature or the arts, or we would be obliged to consider it as a nonhistorical phenomenon.

20. John Orr, *Cinema and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

Art history has often seen stylistic solutions survive the original cultural or historical context in which they emerged as responses to certain problems. Expressionism, for example, appeared as a version of fauvism during the late 1900s as a pure pictorial problem. It reemerged later in a different version as a reaction to a historical situation, conveying historical and political content, right before and during the First World War. And for the third time, expressionism reappeared during the late 1940s at the beginning of modern American painting known as "abstract expressionism" without any reference to the original pictorial and the later historical contexts. The assertion that the cinema of the 1980s and 1990s uses basically the formal solutions of the modernist period (which is only partly true) does not in any way contradict the fact that modernism as an *ideological project* belongs to a historical moment in the past. One can very well consider cinematic modernism as a historical phenomenon appearing in certain cultural contexts and, at the same time, consider its aesthetic aspects as surviving the historical situation in which they saw the light of day.

Seeing cinematic modernism as an unfinished historical phenomenon is not without basis, but proving this requires a strong historical argument—and the rest of this book will argue that the contrary is true: that the second modernist wave as a movement or as a period lasted until the mid-1970s, even as it is quite obvious that some of its stylistic and narrative innovations continued to enrich different cinematic practices.

The idea of modernism as an "unfinished project," however, is problematic. As treated in the works of Astruc, Orr, and Deleuze, among others, modernism is not a historical phenomenon (or historical only in a Hegelian sense) in that it is an end result of an evolutionary process of film "language" (or the semiotic system of film). If modernism has "never been replaced," as runs the argument of these auteurs, it is not because film history does not continue, but because modernism represents the most developed phase of the evolution of the cinematic form. This is a view shared by many theorists and especially critics of the cinema. No scholar of modern cinema can dodge having to answer this question. It is the first important problem we encounter when entering the realm of modern cinema.

Is it true that modernism is the most developed "adult" form of the cinema and that therefore its project will never be finished? We may conceive of the evolution of the cinema in two different ways: from the point of view of the development of audio-visual technology and of its aesthetic form. Cinema as a technical and industrial medium is subject to the changes of technical progress in rendering perceptual data of the world around us and in creating new sensory stimuli. Whether or not we take the aesthetic

aspects into consideration, a film made in the 1940s was obviously able to convey a greater array of sensory stimuli than works from the 1920s due to synchronic sound effects and higher-grade film stock. Similarly, in the 1960s, a filmmaker had a wider range of technological options at his or her disposal to represent physical reality than he/she would have during the Second World War: color or black-and-white film, different formats, an array of lenses, including zoom, among others. So, from this hardly negligible point of view, cinema's audio-visual superstructure is hitched to the train of technological development, which informs its aesthetic capabilities to a very great extent. However, nobody would claim that 1960s modernism is the supreme form of the cinema because of its technological advantages over previous periods. The "evolution of film language" does not refer to the sheer technical progress of the medium.

Cinema as an art form is a recent phenomenon, and has necessarily gone through certain phases in the process of elaborating and refining its expressive tools. No film historian or theoretician would suggest that such a process of development did not take place in the history of the cinema. There is a consensus in film historiography that it took at least twenty to thirty years before certain forms of storytelling, continuity editing, and different forms of montage became standard. Historians' and critics' opinions do not really diverge about which period saw the standardization of narrative norms. Thompson says that by 1917, the classical mode was realized in its basic narrative and stylistic premises.[21] Similarly, Burch considers that the institutional mode was complete by the beginning of the 1920s. There is, however, another approach to the aesthetic development of the cinema, according to which the solidification of the narrative standard is not the crucial distinguishing feature. In André Bazin's account, the evolution of film language is a dialectical process in which the pivotal point is its capacity of continuous representation of time and space. In his article "Evolution of Language," he asserts, from a strictly aesthetic point of view, that the evolution of "film language" reaches its height during the 1940s, when staging in-depth and uninterrupted plan-sequences begins to prevail over analytical montage.[22] And from yet another point of view, that of Eric Rohmer, even the late 1940s cannot be considered an era of a crystallized "classical" cinema. We should

21. Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson, *Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 157.

22. Cf. in André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* (Paris: Éd. du Cerf, 1975), 74. However, in one of his slightly earlier articles ("The Myth of the Total Cinema," 1946), and from a strictly technical point of view, he says that "Cinema has not been yet invented!" Ibid., 23.

emphasize that these views do not necessarily contradict each other, since they consider different objects of development. Thompson and Burch talk about the basic principles of classical Hollywood narration, Bazin talks about film's possibilities of rendering reality, and Rohmer alludes to the exploration of intellectual capacities of cinematic expression. So, did the evolutionary phase of the cinema come to an end by the late 1910s, or was there any further evolution leading to a fulfillment in the 1940s as suggested by Bazin? Is the 1960s the peak of the evolution, or ad absurdum, as suggested by Peter Greenaway, that "we haven't seen any film yet"?[23] How far can we go on in extending the evolutionary course of cinematic expression?

According to the approach used here, the modern art film is not the end result of an inherent evolutionary process of the cinema. It is not even an entirely inherent cinematic phenomenon. The modern art film is cinema's response to the postwar modernist wave in drama, literature, music, and the arts. Late modern cinema is not a style or practice but a form of modernist art, applying various stylistic solutions to express thoughts and feelings generally accepted in a specific period. And the question concerning the finished or unfinished character of modern cinema, in the final analysis, should be seen in the broader context of the modern and the postmodern. One can consider the postmodern as a specific version of modernism (and consequently modernism as an "unfinished project") or as a radically different phenomenon. But one cannot disregard the historical moment when forms hitherto considered as mainstream, productive, rich, sustainable, or simply fashionable all of a sudden become obsolete, empty, and marginal in the eyes of the audience and the artists. This is when a period, a fashion, or a trend ends and turns into something else regardless of what we call it. And unless a certain artistic practice disappears totally, there will always be *something* to replace those forms considered old and obsolete.

The evolution of European cinema after the general decline of artistic modernism in the 1970s has shown a trend similar to that of the arts. Even if many important films of the 1980s and 1990s have continued to use the stylistic and narrative solutions that modernism invented—in fact, some of these have become popular commonplaces, such as the jump cut or the self-reflective quotation—during this period we encounter important aesthetic phenomena in mainstream art filmmaking that are essentially uncommon to modernism. To mention but a few, I can point to the emphasis on the nonreal character of the narrative (whereas one of modernism's main goals was

23. In a television interview conducted by the author in 1995 and broadcast in 1997.

the demystification of narrative fiction), narrative and stylistic heterogeneity (which is contrary to the purity of modernism), and the intensification of emotional effects (as opposed to modernism's intellectual puritanism). All these traits are new not only in comparison with modernism but also with its principles. Evolutionists on the one hand must have a hard time accepting that cinema in a highest aesthetic sense not only has not ceased to exist but has followed the general principles of postmodern art in the 1980s. European art cinema did not revert back to classicism; it became something other than what it had been during the modernism of the 1960s.[24] This is not the least because even the most classical narratives used already many inventions of modernism. Style analysts on the other hand have to explain the considerable fusion of classical and modernist forms in characteristic films of the 1980s and 1990s. To understand the cinema of the postmodern period one has to take into consideration both the transformation of forms of mass entertainment and cinema's artistic utilization. Television, computer games, and digital animation are new forms of audiovisual communication that considerably altered the spectrum of this medium. New forms of audiovisual art become intelligible only when ones takes into consideration their new functions adapted more widely to the arts and communication, just as in the era of modern cinema.

24. An interesting variation of the Deleuzian conception can be found in French film critic Jean-Michel Frodon, *L'âge moderne du cinéma français* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995). In his view, modern cinema was an attempt to realize the "essence of the cinema," that is, a new way of thinking, which is different from all other systems of thought (science, ideology, etc.). However, modern cinema remained marginal, and this project was later taken over by new electronic media. Frodon suggests that the modernist project to unfold the "essence of the cinema" was a partial failure, and cinema's evolution turns it into something else. This train of thought could be developed consistently, provided that one gives up the concept of the "essence of the cinema" and accepts the notion of the "essence of the audio-visual medium," of which cinema is only one, ultimately transitory, manifestation.

PART TWO

Fig. 3. Hour of the Wolf (Ingmar Bergman, 1968).

The Forms of Modernism

:3:

Modern Art Cinema: Style or Movement?

Part 2 gives a description of the basic formal variations of modern cinema in the 1960s and 1970s. Narrative, genres, visual style, and general compositional principles will be my object of analysis. I will try to arrive at useful generalizations regarding the variety of modernist forms and will provide as many examples as necessary to support them. More examples can be found in part 3, which will approach the phenomenon of modern cinema from a historical point of view.

Examples could obviously be multiplied, but for the sake of clarity I restricted myself to the most conspicuous and most typical ones, hoping that they are sufficient to illustrate the given category. The general categories however were developed by an analysis of a corpus of 241 films listed in a chart arranged by nationality and year of production located in the appendix. This chart is the summary of the most characteristic European modern films of this period.

In film history, the notion of style is used in various contexts, but most often it refers to specific periods of a national film production and to the formal characteristics prevailing in the most important films of the given movement. It is also used to designate a systematic application of certain technical solutions, which can be a singular choice in a film of any period and any cultural context, such as the "soft lighting style," the "long take style," or the "deep focus style." Because the coincidence of such technical preferences specifies the expressive quality of the film form, which is in turn an aesthetic function of a specific cultural context, the more such technical features are connected to each other under the notion of style, the more a cultural or historical context is elicited by this notion. Expressionist lighting, for example, is a relatively neutral effect with regard to a historical or

cultural context. It has been present in various periods of film history since the 1920s. Its connection with deep focus photography, however, is a rather singular stylistic phenomenon that appears in the 1940s and is characteristic all through the period of the 1950s, disappearing in the early 1960s. Combined with the flashback narrative technique, this is generally recognized as a style most characteristic of film noir. And if we want to characterize the style of film noir, not only do we have to enumerate its characteristic features but we also have to find an explanation as to why these features meet in this style and not in others. The broad notion of style is not in contradiction with its narrow, technical sense; it connects a number of relevant techniques through a contextual explanation.

Speaking of modernism as a *specific* style puts us in the most delicate situation of being forced to determine the cultural and/or historical context informing this particular style. The difficulties of this task are countless. First of all, cinematic modernism, unlike all other stylistic movements in the cinema, is an international phenomenon, so no particular national cultural tradition can be singled out as a factor in its background context. A historical background of modernism is also very difficult to build, since its period is extremely lengthy compared to the average period (four or five years) of other styles in film history. Not to mention the fact that in the case of modernism we are not talking of one single period, but two (1919–1929, and ca. 1950–1975). The fifty-five years in the middle of the twentieth century were eventful enough to make it rather difficult to consider them as a general historical background of "a modernist film style." Finally, and most importantly, modernism's most salient formal traits are not specific to the cinema; rather, they are cinematic applications of the stylistic features of modern art more broadly. In general terms, modern film is less a specific type of film than a specific version of modern art. The basic aesthetic principles of modern art (subjectivity, reflexivity, and abstraction) determine aesthetic forms at a much more general level than the style. And even if Greenberg was right to call modernism an artistic "period style," we are prohibited from following suit with regard to the cinema both because modernism is not a phenomenon of the cinema from the 1920s consecutively through the 1970s and because cinematic modernism is of a heterogeneous stylistic inspiration.

Modernism is not a particular style in the cinema; it is rather the impact of different modernist movements *in the narrative art cinema*, engendering different (modern) film styles. This is how we can explain the two appearances of modernism in the cinema and also the differences between the two. The two periods of modernist cinema followed the two important avant-garde or modernist waves in art: the first in the 1910s and 1920s, the second

in the 1960s. The forms of modern cinema in both periods adapted to the current forms of artistic modernism.

This brings us to an intrinsic reason for the difference between early and late modern cinema: the difference between silent and sound cinema. Modernist cinema of the twenties was an attempt to exploit cinema's aesthetic potential for the purposes of modern art. In the twenties this meant the modern art of the *silent film.* In this respect the lack of the synchronic sound is to be regarded as an asset rather than a defect since it emphasized the abstract, antinaturalist quality of the film medium. The onset of sound therefore shattered in many ways the aesthetics of the silent film. Some aesthetic theorists realized the crisis during the thirties. Rudolf Arnheim was the most pessimistic of them. He posited that with sound, film had lost aesthetic homogeneity and purity, which was the basis of its artistic quality, once and for all.[1] To filmmakers and theorists who worked on the abstract features of the medium, synchronic sound caused cinema to move away from its own aesthetic potential toward shallow realism and theatricality. Theater as the symbol of the anticinema or the impure cinema loomed large again. As Carl Dreyer put it in 1933, "The talking film presents itself like a theater piece in concentrated form."[2] He warned of the dangers of the "filmed theater." Arnheim, in his critique of the sound film in 1938, also notes that talking film imitates theater. Béla Balázs was more optimistic. He agreed that the sound film was a "catastrophe" for the evolution of the silent film and that artistically the sound films of the thirties were of a much lower quality that the silent films of the twenties, but he also thought that this was a transitory phenomenon. He realized that sound held a potential for an entirely new art form. He formulated a requirement that the new technique should not only replace silent film, but it should also choose a new subject to represent.[3] Balázs was the first to realize that an entirely new film aesthetics had to be developed, new possibilities of abstraction had to be found to drive cinema back to the path of the modern arts. Narrative art-film practice had to *reinvent cinematic abstraction* against the enhanced realism caused by the synchronic sound.

The second phase of modernism in the cinema was the modernization of the artistic practice of the *sound film* according to principles character-

1. Rudolf Arnheim, "The New Laokoon," in *Film as Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957).

2. C. Theodor Dreyer, "The Real Talking Film" (1933), in *Dreyer in Double Reflection*, ed. Donald Skoller (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 54.

3. Cf. Béla Balázs, *Der Geist des Films* (Halle/Saale: Verlag Wilhelm Knapp, 1930).

izing the second modernist movement in the arts. Patterns of cinematic abstraction were already different in the fifties from those of the twenties. Naturally, the cultural and aesthetic context was very different also. Therefore, the "return" of modernism in the cinema was not the return of the *same* modernism. Not only was it an abstract art of a different world ten years after the Second World War, but it also had very different artistic references. Instead of painting and music, the second modernist period of the cinema relied on the two major "enemies" of early modern cinema, literature and theater. While the aesthetic goal of early modernism's abstraction was to reach a purely visual form, the goal of the abstract forms of the second modernist wave was to reach a purely mental representation. And the real difference between early and late modernist cinema is that early modernism was founded upon a unified conception, whereas forms of late modernism are very much determined by a cultural background whose "mental representation" appeared to be relevant for filmmakers at different parts of the world. This made late modernism the first really international art movement in the cinema realized in a variety of styles or trends.

At the end of both modern periods we find a considerable technological developments: synchronic sound in the 1920s; and video and digital image in the 1970s. Both developments altered greatly the ideas about the nature and future of cinema. Both modernisms appeared at the end of their respective artistic modernist movements, and each were halted by an important step in the development of motion picture technology. This suggests that technological innovations were first exploited by the commercial entertainment industry rather than the art-film institution, and second, that the use of these technological innovations played a role in the creation of the modernist film movement only at the inspiration of exterior artistic influences. If there is to come a highly abstract intellectual third modernist period, I venture to predict that this will be largely based on forms and techniques developed in the digital age.

The fact that these trends are to be called *modern* reflects the adherence to some general aesthetic traits of modern art. Beyond this, we have to analyze modern cinema as a specifically cinematic phenomenon. Hence understanding modern cinema demands scrutiny of the form at a level so basic that commonalities can be drawn between most modern films but also most modern works of art. Appreciating the fact that modernism was an international phenomenon in the cinema leads us to the question of whether homogeneity was engendered by the general modernist principles, or, to the contrary, the differences engendered by the various cultural specificities and traditions of national cinemas "fertilized" by modernism should be

considered when describing modern cinema. There is a risk that speaking of modern cinema only in terms of reflexivity, stylistic purity, or abstraction takes us no further than the commonplaces of modernist art in general. Instead, we must look at the ways these principles modernized different national cinemas and created a variety of *modern film forms*. For the variety of modernist forms is due precisely to the variety of traditional cultural legacies absorbed by the cinema. When contrasted to Hollywood classicism, modernism may appear as an almost uniform set of "disturbing" narrative practices. When set against the variety of cultural patterns and traditions, breaking through more or less all national cinemas, modernism appears as a multiform modernization trend in art cinema. Understanding modern cinema as an aesthetic modernization movement, our analysis of the modern film forms will focus on the various patterns modernism generates together with traditional cultural (cinematic and extracinematic) traditions.

:4:
Narration in Modern Cinema

By far the most spectacular formal characteristic of modern cinema is the way it handles narration and how that relates to storytelling. A common perception about modern cinema is that when telling a story with a clear beginning and ending, it tells it in such a way that is difficult for viewers to understand, and many details and explanations are left to the viewer's imagination to figure out. Furthermore, the crisis of modern cinema historically has often been associated with modern art cinema's notorious unwillingness to tell "understandable" and "appealing" stories that could attract large audiences; this attitude became particularly radical at the beginning of the 1970s. Meanwhile, modern filmmakers complained about the double stress caused by the producer's and the audience's claims for "normal" stories, on the one hand, and by the "essential impossibility" of storytelling, on the other. This situation is best described by Wim Wenders's film mourning modern art cinema, *The State of the Things* (1982), in which director Munro summarizes his opinion about storytelling with the following bon mot: "Stories happen only in stories."

Modern art cinema's problem regarding narration was summarized by Deleuze in a philosophical form that I referred to in chapter 3, which will be our conceptual starting point. All problems of storytelling stem from the disconnection of human actions from traditional routines or patterns of human relationships. This is what Deleuze refers to as the fundamental "disbelief" in the world, and this is what is commonly referred to as "modern alienation." Modern cinema's function, according to Deleuze, is to restore belief in the world, to replace traditional links between the individuals and the world with new ones. What we are interested in here is to see the ways modern cinema attempts to achieve this "restoration." In other words, we

will see what forms modern cinema created to tell stories that lack traditional confidence about the realistic causes and effects of human actions. Modern art cinema is essentially narrative, but its narrative forms are based on interactions unknown or rarely apparent in classical art cinema, because they are based not in physical contact but in different forms of mental responses. Those unusual human interactions determine the specific narrative patterns and genres of modern art cinema.

Fortunately, much of the work of mapping modern art cinema's narrative techniques has been done by David Bordwell in his seminal work *Narration in the Fiction Film*.[1] He gives thorough analyses of various modern art films' narrative techniques and makes generalizations, most of which have stood the test of time. While giving a brief overview of Bordwell's main concepts regarding modern narrative techniques as they differ from the classical norm, I will propose another distinction that can be made within the categories characterizing nonclassical narrative forms.

The first thing one notes in Bordwell's description of the narrative techniques of nonclassical narrative cinema is that it includes not one but three different modes that are different from the classical one, to which he adds Godard as the representative of a special case of modern narration whose distinctive feature is to constantly switch between various narrative modes. Bordwell does not mention any examples of popular entertainment films to develop his categories of nonclassical narration modes; this suggests that, as far as narrative techniques are concerned, nonclassical modes were used only by art films while popular films were made within the classical mode.

This highlights a small terminological issue in Bordwell's categorization. After having discussed thoroughly what he calls "classical" narration, he goes on to discuss other historical forms of narrative, but he does not identify any of them with the categorical opposite of the "classical," which is none other than the "modern." Bordwell claims that his categorization is fundamentally historical. His narrative "modes" consist of "fairly stable and consistent narrational principles employed in a historically defined group of films."[2] A closer look reveals, however, that the overwhelming majority of his examples come in fact from early or late modernist art cinema, Japanese directors Yasujiro Ozu and Kenji Mizoguchi being the only exceptions. This is quite understandable from a historical point of view, since there can be

1. David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

2. Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 150.

no doubt about the massive unfolding of different nonclassical narrative devices around the two modernist periods.

But it raises the question of whether the norms Bordwell opposes to the "classical" are not simply variations of the modernist. When Bordwell traces the history of "art-cinema narration," he in fact tells the story of the development of modern cinema: starting with *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, continuing with Gance's and Epstein's films from the 1920s, jumping over the 1930s and much of the 1940s to arrive at neorealism, which he calls a "transitional phenomenon," and finally arriving at the late 1950s and 1960s, into the heart of late modernism. The same happens with the "historical-materialist" mode: main early examples from the 1920s are from Eisenstein's films and Kozintzev and Trauberg's *The New Babylon*, followed by Godard and Straub and Huillet from the late 1960s and early 1970s. As for "parametric narration," Bordwell's main example is Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959), which was celebrated by *Cahiers du cinéma* as Bresson's first modernist masterpiece, and Bordwell mentions Dreyer, Ozu, and Mizoguchi as the main masters of parametric narration. Dreyer was obviously a great modernist auteur throughout his career, while Ozu and Mizoguchi are the only names in this list that do not fit in this category. Their films, however, are only cited in some of their details and not as consistent examples of nonclassical narration, and it is especially true for Mizoguchi, of whom no real example is cited.

In fact, Bordwell was fully aware of the possibility of simply identifying his "nonclassical" narrative norms with narrative forms of modernism. He explicitly states that each of these categories could be called "modernist." And the reason why he is rather reluctant to apply this term is because he does not want to attach this historical label to filmmakers who otherwise could not be proved to be under the influence of European modernism. But as we saw, the only such auteurs cited are Ozu and Mizoguchi, who represent no crucial cases for the categorization anyway.[3]

This reluctance reveals an ambiguity in Bordwell's categorical system. In accordance with Bordwell's main project of developing a "historical poetics"

3. "The important difference is that we cannot posit any influence of such movements upon all parametric films. For reasons that have to be explained in each particular context, filmmakers in widely differing periods and cultures have utilized parametric principles. . . . Whether we call this 'modernism' is not as important as recognizing that only after an aesthetic was formulated explicitly was it possible for critics and spectators to construct an extrinsic norm that helps us grasp certain problematic films." Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 310.

of cinema,[4] this system is midway between technicality and historicity. It is historical because it not derived from an abstract categorical system that allows only a set number of cases. In other words, it is a historical taxonomy. But it is technical in the sense that Bordwell does not link any of his categories to historical contexts, and he leaves open the possibility for anyone to discover them in any period of film history. The ambiguity stems from the fact that narrative techniques, after they become accepted, remain in fact available for anyone, anywhere, anytime. Historical "modes of narration," however, are conglomerates of certain techniques that are more fashionable in certain periods and in certain parts of the world than in others. And if so, it is very hard to avoid explaining why a particular technique appears consistently here and not there, in a particular period and not in another. In other words, if we could as easily call nonclassical narrative modes "modernist," as Bordwell says, and we are ready to face the hassles of contextual explanation, why shouldn't we? Seemingly, Bordwell was careful not to venture into historical generalizations whose verification may have gone beyond empirical investigation. He was writing his book just as European modernism was fading away, and nothing was sure about its trajectory. Twenty years later the picture is clearer: modernism is over, and now we may assert with certainty that Bordwell's nonclassical narrative modes are all specific variations of what we can call modern narration, not one or the other but all of them together.

Most of the techniques or their primitive precursors constituting the core of these modes appeared during the 1920s period. Each of them represented an attempt to create the modern version of artistic utilization of the cinema. Neorealism of the late 1940s added some more narrative features to the set of nonclassical narrative techniques (which I will discuss later), but these were not as radically opposed to classical narrative norms as the later developments of modern art-cinema narration. Neorealism was just loosening up classical narration, which made it a possible model to follow even for American directors in the 1960s and an appropriate starting point for all kinds of experimentation. Modern narrative techniques really started to develop and create ever new variations from the late 1950s on through the 1960s and 1970s, that is, during the late modernist period.

From our point of view, the great merit of Bordwell's categories is to show that modern film narration consists in fact not of one homogeneous system, but of a set of different modes or narrative styles according to the models

4. "[T]his account of narration may encourage the growth of a valuable realm of knowledge: the historical poetics of cinema." Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 336.

they follow in modern art. What he calls "art-cinema narration" is, roughly speaking, a cinematic version of modern literature, especially of the *nouveau roman*, or new novel. "Historical-materialist" narration mainly follows the model of the modern political theater of Bertolt Brecht, Alfred Döblin, and Erwin Piscator. And "parametric narration" is indebted first of all to modern serial music and abstract painting. These are not exclusive forms regarding their attachment to modernism; on the contrary, they all represent a different approach to modern art.

The question remains of what we make of films or directors who clearly do not belong to the modernist paradigm and yet make use of nonclassical narrative methods. This question is more salient in the postmodern than in the premodern (or intermodern) period. In the 1980s and 1990s some modernist narrative techniques became increasingly popular not only in European art films but also in America, and some of them were clearly appropriated by the Hollywood entertainment industry. While, say, Ozu or Mizoguchi were exceptions as nonmodernist users of the "parametric mode," David Lynch, Quentin Tarantino, the Coen brothers, or films like *Crash* or *Fight Club* are systematic manifestations of several sophisticated modernist narrative procedures "infiltrating" probably the world of quality Hollywood production. The entertainment industry can incorporate any kind of techniques if a wide enough audience is used to it. This does not mean that everything that modernist art cinema has invented one day will become a Hollywood cliché (cinéma vérité or radical serialism will probably never find their ways to Hollywood entertainment), but still there are a number of narrative techniques that were first designed for intellectuals, then became fashionable, and finally became a pattern that virtually everybody understands and so are appropriate for entertainment purposes. David Lynch would have never been able to make a film like *Mulholland Drive* (2001) in the Hollywood of the 1960s or 1970s. The most Hollywood could tolerate of modernism in this period was the slightly neorealistic style of Paul Mazursky, John Schlesinger, John Cassavetes, or Bob Rafelson. The fact that *Mulholland Drive* was not only made but that director David Lynch was awarded an Oscar nomination for it proves that narrative ambiguity, which was introduced into modern cinema by Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet as a highly avant-garde artistic element, forty years later has finally become a mainstream norm. The same is true for Asian art cinema in the postmodern period. Modern narration became a commonsense everyday practice in the art-cinema industry during the 1980s and 1990s. Artists who were considered obscure and highly elitist in the modernist period could become popular entertainers by sticking to their one-time esoteric modernist styles.

Hungarian director Miklós Jancsó is the most astounding example of this. His films have always been examples of "dead serious" modernist abstraction, and his plots were akin to historical tragedies. In his films made in the late 1990s and the first decade of the next century he continues his ornamental "ballet" style, together with the highly abstract elliptical narrative mode. Yet the same style is now used to make popular comedies and political satires. Oddly enough, his domestic popularity has never been greater.

Here we arrive at a problem that has been waiting to be broached. If modernist features of narration are techniques that art cinema developed to modernize itself and that later became a customary practice even for entertainment films, as I contend, then how can we define such a thing as nonmodernist art cinema? If all nonclassical narrative techniques belong to modernism, what are the distinctive features of art cinema before, during, and after modernism? Before we go into the problems of the narration of the "modernist art film," first we have to understand the "classical art film."

Classical versus Modernist Art Films

We should look for characteristic narrative features of films that we consider more artistic within the classical mode than those films that clearly fit into the category of classical entertainment. This distinction is essential for understanding modern cinema. For this we do not have to invent a dramatically new category system. Rather, we have to find narrative features listed by Bordwell under the various categories of nonclassical narration that are characteristic of art films belonging to the modernist paradigm and to others as well.

Here are the most important features that, according to Bordwell, characterize narrative techniques as they diverge from the classical norm: nonredundant "suzhet" (plot) structure; a story less motivated by genre rules, not so easily associated with a common genre; episodic structure; the elimination of deadlines as a temporal motivation of the plot; concentration on the character and the "condition humaine" rather than on the plot; extensive representation of different mental states, like dreams, memories, fantasy; self-consciousness in stylistic and narrative techniques; permanent gaps in narrative motivation and chronology; delayed and dispersed exposition; a subjective reality that relates to the story; a loosening of the chain of cause and effect in the plot; extensive use of chance as a motivation; a concern within the plot for psychic reactions rather than action; frequent use of symbolic rather than realist linkage of images; radical manipulation of temporal order; increased ambiguity regarding the interpretation of the story;

open-ended narratives; "retheoricizing" the *fabula*, that is, subordinating the plot to the development of rhetorical (mostly political) arguments; overt political didacticism; use of collage principle; the dominance of style over narration; and serial construction.

Close examination of these features show that they can be divided into two broad categories. The first category consists of those traits whose effect is to create a multilayered description of the characters, the environment or the story itself. The function of these traits is to create a *complex signifying structure* in which the viewer's attention is diverted from the direct cause-and-effect chain of the plot toward information that is only indirectly related or unrelated to causality. My claim is that these traits are a necessary (yet not sufficient) condition for the emergence of some kind of artistic quality (at least in the Western commonsense understanding of art during the past couple of hundred years). These are the characteristics of a narrative mode that carry artistic pretensions, whether the film is classical or modern. In general we might say that what we call narrative features of art cinema come out of the dramatic and narrative characteristics of the nineteenth-century realist novel and psychological bourgeois drama. As argued above, modernist movements in the cinema in the 1920s as well as in the 1960s emerged as opposition to this nineteenth-century conception of art cinema, and much less as an opposition to the pulp fiction literature that most of Hollywood film production was based on. When both modernist waves came to an end, mainstream art cinema returned to the standard narrative universe of the nineteenth-century novel, in some cases with a postmodernist twist in the 1980s.

The second category of art cinema's narrative characteristics described by Bordwell is the relation with the three main principles of modern art: abstraction, reflexivity, and subjectivity. In other words, art-cinema narrative involves *ambiguity* of the interpretation, the spectator's conscious intellectual *involvement* in the plot construction, and the *subjective* character of the story. Those are the traits that are responsible for creating the modernist effect in narration.

Art films in general have a less redundant plot pattern, because their meaning is intended to be more dense and multilayered. Art films largely respond less to generic rules because these rules constitute a predetermined code that leaves less room for artistic invention. Art films are overall more interested in the character's psychological description or in the relationship between the characters and their environment than in developing a linear plot. There is probably no need to enumerate the examples supporting this

observation, as it is such a basic impression common to ordinary moviegoers and sophisticated critics alike.

This trait reorients the difference not between classical and modern art-cinema narration but rather between artistic and entertainment pretensions of storytelling. The fact that this is not merely a typically modernist feature can be best illustrated by the early classical-style films of Ingmar Bergman. Most of his early films are psychological chamber dramas dealing with human relationships, with very little action. He almost never quit this type of art-cinema form even during his modernist phase. What Bergman did in the beginning of the 1960s was that he modernized this form by adding stylistic and narrative features of modernism to it. He located his stories in abstract time and space, as in *Silence* (1963), he made them open-ended, as in *Winter Light* (1962), he made them self-reflexive and ambiguous, as in *Persona* (1966). When modernism became obsolete at the end of the 1970s, he just returned to his classical narrative form and to a classical style adapted to the trend of the 1970s and 1980s.

This aspect of art-cinema narration is the source for other characteristic traits: the lack of deadlines in the plot, episodic structure, and representation of different mental states are all consequences of the concentration on the character rather than on the plot, while permanent gaps in the plot's chronology is a consequence of the episodic structure. None of these are solely characteristic of modern art films.

The difference between classical and modernist art films starts beyond these traits. If an art film in general tends to present a complex situation that cannot be reduced to one or two well-defined problems and therefore concentrates on the character's complex persona, what happens in modern art cinema is that this complex situation becomes ambiguous or impossible to define. The viewer is provocatively faced with the fact that in order to understand the film, there is no need to look for reasons in the past, no need to try to expect a causal chain of events extending into the future. Modern and classical art films both avoid a simple chain of events and employ instead a multilayered description of a human situation and an environment, but the modern art film makes all causal chains of events irrelevant. Antonioni's *Eclipse* (1962), for example, starts rather in medias res, with the final scenes of a couple's breakup. For a while the viewer is eager to learn more about the reasons that lead to the divorce, but soon her expectations will be dispersed. She will realize that there is no information forthcoming that could make the plot more understandable. This part of Claudia's story simply will not continue, so all information about her past becomes irrelevant.

Classical art films make narration a multilayered, complex system, and the modernist art film makes this complex system essentially ambiguous or even self-contradictory. Carlos Saura's *The Garden of Delights* (1970) is a good illustration of how modernist film narration eradicates clear causal chains from a story that could be made as a classical art film as well as a classical action film. The story is about a middle-aged wealthy industrialist who suffered a serious car accident and loses his memory as well as most of his basic bodily and mental functions. The family desperately tries to do everything to make him regain his memory and his interest in business. At one point we learn that a huge family fortune is in a Swiss bank but that nobody except him has any idea how to access it; moreover, nobody knows the combination for the family safe, either, and finally, that if he remains debilitated, the family will lose control of the company. So there is an important financial interest in him regaining his memory. They try to make him recover his past by reminding him of all the important events of his childhood and youth, but with very little results. He lives in a world made up of a mixture of bits of memory, fantasy, and practical reality. Finally, the board of directors decides that he is unable to act as president of the company, and he finds himself alone in his garden, where he envisions everybody in his life sitting in wheelchairs like him.

If the protagonist's situation had been disclosed and his accident had taken place at the beginning or in the first half of the film, this story would have everything it takes to make it either a classical art film or a popular genre film. Depending on the filmmaker's intentions, this story could be turned into a classical melodrama concentrating on whether and how Antonio regains his mental and physical abilities or how he overcomes his inability and fulfills his duties. Or it could as well be turned into a more action-oriented suspense film concentrating on intrigues surrounding the family's wealth. In this case the film would focus on how the money can be recuperated in spite of the fact that nobody knows where it is deposited.

It is the dramaturgical focus on different levels on the one hand, and the ambiguity of his situation (his relationship to the members of his family, his business, his past, etc.) that makes *The Garden of Delights* a modernist art film. First, the narrative's focus is on the diffuse mental effects of the protagonist's interaction with the exterior world rather than on the material and existential concerns resulting from this interaction. Saura wanted to show what this particular mental universe is like rather than the practical consequences of this mental state. Second, the focus conceals the main information about the situation and the problems to be solved that follow from this situation.

Here we are at the point where another distinction between classical and modern art films seems necessary. In classical art films the story is usually developed from the conflict between a particular character and a generally specified environment. The conflict cannot be eliminated by resolving a single well-defined problem. The more complex the character, the less need to have one single causal starting point in the exposition. Development of the conflict may appear step by step as we learn more about the main character's persona. Rational problem solving is not the main motivation in art films of classical narrative form, which develop psychological motivations for the plot to explain why the character acts the way he does. That is where modern narration differs. *Concentration on the characters in modern cinema does not involve psychological characterization.* It is the general "human condition" of the characters that becomes the focus of interest of modern art films rather than the encounter of a particular character and a particular environment.

Heroes of modern narratives tend to become abstract entities disconnected from their environments. That is what makes psychological description irrelevant in modern narrative. It is precisely the lack of psychological characterization that Roland Barthes defines as modernism. "The most immediate criterion of an art work's modernity is that it is not 'psychological' in the traditional sense."[5] And this is one of the main features Alain Robbe-Grillet refers to when describing the principles of *nouveau roman*, one of the main sources of modern film narration.[6] Modernist narrative creates its main hero, "the abstract individual." And it is by the ahistorical, antipsychological character of the abstract individual that modernist narrative differs the most from classical art-film narration. To understand what difference modernist features make in art-film narration, we have to go beyond the pure formal qualities. We have to understand *what modern cinema tells in a different way.*

The Alienation of the Abstract Individual

The abstract individual, "the man," whose past and inner drives are not determining factors of what happens to him, is a genuine modernist invention. This is how Carl Gustav Jung describes the "modern soul," of which the "abstract individual" is the narrative materialization:

5. Michel Delahaye and Jacques Rivette, "Entretien avec Roland Barthes," *Cahiers du cinéma 147* (September 1963): 30.

6. For discussion of *nouveau roman*'s influence on modern cinema, see part 3.

> Let us say that the man whom we call modern, who lives in the immediate present time, is like standing on a peak at the edge of the world, with the sky above, and with the entirety of humankind below, whose history vanishes into the haze of the commencement; in front of him, the abyss of all the future. . . . He who comes to this consciousness of the present is necessarily lonely. "Modern" man is lonely all the time. . . . What is more, he can really be modern only if he arrives at the extremity of the world . . . with Nothingness recognized in front of him from which anything can emerge.[7]

Jung's man is free from his social determinants, free from any desires such as love, greed or ambition that link him to another person or would drive him to physical action whether or not he is suffering from this "freedom." This man is free from his past, and his future is hazy. The world is outside of him, and he is totally absorbed by his inner psychic life, which however cannot be organized into a rational system leading to planned acts. This inner universe consists of fragments of memories, dreams, and fantasy, mixing with real-life experience that can be organized in random combinations. "The man" is a mystery or a black box from the interior that will be never revealed, and a totally random specimen of his species from the point of view of the outside world, and who seems not to do what he wants because what he wants does not differ from whatever happens to him. Modern cinema's (anti)hero is the alienated abstract individual whose main lesson to learn in his world, exemplified by Young Törless at the conclusion of Robert Musil's novel is *alles geschiet*, everything just happens.[8] The greatest examples of modern cinema are those that give the most radical and complex image about the estranged "modern individual": the films of Antonioni, Federico Fellini, Bergman, Tarkovsky, and Jancsó. Godard's most important early works (*Breathless*, 1960; *The Little Soldier*, 1963; *My Life to Live*, 1962; *Pierrot le fou*, 1965), on the other hand, describe the becoming of the modern individual through the collapse of its antecedent, the romantic hero.

Features of modern narrative are consequences of the fact that they tell stories about *an estranged person who has lost all her essential contacts to others, to the world, to the past, and to the future or lost even the foundations of her personality.* The more radical this person's estrangement, the more radical the modernist character of the narrative. The more a person is rooted in traditional human relationships and in social relations, the more classical the narrative.

7. "Le problème psychique de l'homme moderne," in *Problèmes de l'âme moderne* (Paris: Éd. Buchet-Chastel, 1960), 166.

8. Musil, *Confusion of Young Törless*.

Fig. 4. An "abstract individual": *8 ½* (Federico Fellini, 1963).

As we can see, the category of "art" is involved nowhere in this distinction. Obviously, representation of human estrangement is not the best-suited topic for entertainment films; however, in some cases we find elements of estranged characterization in popular cinema, too, and it is no surprise that modern filmmakers were very sensitive to these sporadic examples: the persona of Buster Keaton, stories of American film noir, some films of Hitchcock. On the other hand Woody Allen is an American filmmaker who constantly engages in ironic reflection on the modernist tradition of alienation while desperately searching for ways to express the experience of alienation *within* the classical narrative paradigm. Allen's films can be understood as the critique of the false identification of art and modernism in the cinema.

Who Is the "Individual" in Modern Cinema?

However abstractly the individual may be represented in modern films, she cannot be so abstract as to be deprived of all personal or social characteristics. That is possible only in literature where the main character has no physical presence and the writer can play with the exterior description of the protagonist. In film, characters inevitably have a look, they are necessarily dressed in one way or another, they live somewhere, and even if their occupation is not specified, the scriptwriter has to decide about the social group they belong to. A protagonist of a modern film can never be as abstract as one in a *nouveau roman*. The only way modern films can generalize their characters is to disconnect them from their environment by particular situations or story patterns, which I will discuss in detail in the next section.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to see what kinds of personages different modern films use to depict the individual. Obviously there are no strict rules, but we can try to find the most typical character types, and we have every reason to suppose that the modern director's choice of a particular

type is highly determined by a given social background and a cultural tradition. I will list only the most typical examples here.

In most cases the individual is an urban upper- or lower-middle-class person. It is not so much his financial conditions that are interesting as his behavior, his way of speaking, and especially his interest in culture. In the films of Antonioni, as many critics have noted already, "the man" is an upper-middle-class intellectual (*L'avventura*, 1960; *La notte*, 1961; *Eclipse*, 1962; *Blow-Up*, 1966), or an industrialist as in *The Red Desert* (1964). The high-class industrialist appears also in *Zabriskie Point*, where the protagonist is a university student. In Fellini's three earliest modern films the protagonist is also an upper-middle-class intellectual/businessman (*La dolce vita*, 1960; *8 1/2*, 1963; *Juliet of the Spirits*, 1965). In his later mythological series class is obviously less relevant, although *Satyricon* (1969) is set in an upper-middle-class Roman environment, while *Fellini's Casanova* (1976) is an intellectual-aristocrat. Protagonists in Pier Paolo Pasolini's two most radical modernist works (*Teorema*, 1968; *Porcile*, 1969) are also upper-middle-class industrialists. However, protagonists in Pasolini's earlier post-neorealist films (*L'Accattone!* 1961; *Mamma Roma*, 1962), as well as the Pasolini-scripted debut of Bernardo Bertolucci (*The Grim Reaper*, 1962) are urban proletarians, which clearly shows the remnants of the neorealist inspiration. By contrast, the new wave heroes are in most cases lower-middle-class urban intellectuals (even Michel Poiccard's father in *Breathless* was a musician). The only films in which class determination is difficult to establish is Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961), where all we know is that the protagonists are probably "very rich people," but there is no way to know how rich they are. The universe of lower-middle-class to middle-class intellectuals is the social framework of Bergman's modern films.

The urban intellectual is a typical protagonist of Hungarian, Czech, and Polish modern cinema as well, although here the spectrum is wider. First, because historical topics involve a variety of different historical social groups, like soldiers (Jancsó's *The Red and the White*, 1967), peasants (Ferenc Kósa's *Ten Thousand Suns*, 1965) or aristocrats (Andrzej Wajda's *The Wedding*, 1973), but also because wealth and an upper-middle-class way of life were not considered characteristic of the social structure of Eastern Europe of the time. We can very rarely find poor people in modern cinema, and only a few workers (Ermanno Olmi's *The Fiancés*, 1963; Agnès Varda's *Happiness*, 1965; or Béla Tarr's *The Family Nest*, 1977). By contrast, artists are frequently represented in modern cinema, especially in self-reflexive films, such as Antonioni's *La notte* and *Blow-Up*, Fellini's *8 1/2*, Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (1966), and *Mirror* (1974), Wajda's *Everything for Sale* (1969), Bergman's *Persona*

Fig. 5. A pastor without faith and congregation: Gunnar Björnstrand in *Winter Light* (Ingmar Bergman, 1962).

(1966) and *Rite* (1969), but also in Louis Malle's *A Time to Live and a Time to Die* (1963), Henning Carlsen's *Hunger* (1966), Vilgot Sjöman's *I Am Curious (Blue)* (1968), Wenders's *False Movement* (1974), Ken Russell's *Savage Messiah* (1972), and Marco Ferreri's *Liza* (1972).

The first reason why the archetype of the individual is the urban middle-class intellectual is that he has to be free of material concerns. This can be achieved either by making him rich or by placing this problem out of his range of interest. Secondly, the individual should be free to move, so working hours must not be a constraint for him. Therefore he cannot be a clerk or a factory worker. He should not have a profession that dictates that he assume responsibility for other people, either; therefore he is not a doctor or a lawyer, let alone a politician. (He may be a priest, but one that has lost his faith and has no congregation anyway, like in Bergman's *Winter Light*). The individual is concerned above all with his inner universe and by the general state of the world, and that is another reason for him to be an intellectual or an artist. But in many cases the individual has no profession whatsoever, or it is never made clear what that profession is. In most early Godard films, the profession of the protagonists is not specified, just like that profession in Antonioni's *Eclipse* or in *La notte*, where Lidia's profession is unknown.

The individual is lonely, so she lives in a big city or wanders around different places. For all of the above mentioned reasons, the individual must not be too old, which would make him less flexible and more concerned about his material life. And he must not be too young, which would take away much of his freedom of choice, although the theme of revolt fits well with the concept of childhood, as seen in early Truffaut films, *The 400 Blows* (1959) and *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960), or in Malle's *Zazie in the Subway* (1960). So, most typically the individual is young or in his mid-thirties. Gender is not a distinctive feature of "the individual"; he might as well be a she.

I would not attach too much importance to the fact that in cases of a single lead most protagonists of modern films are male figures; it just probably reflect the average of the overall percentage of single male heroes in cinema or the personal taste of the individual masters.

Lack or extreme looseness of the individual's connections to the world makes his persona a manifestation of mental freedom. His freedom has important consequences regarding the stories about these individuals. The first consequence is a certain passivity or inaction; the second is the unpredictability of his actions and reactions. Two main characteristics of modern narrative forms derive from this: the role of chance in the plot and the open-endedness of the stories.

The Role of Chance

In his analysis of the modern film, Nöel Burch emphasizes the importance of the aleatoric principle deriving from modern music. He distinguishes between two different forms this principle takes in modern art. One of them refers to occurrences of uncontrolled events as compositional elements; the second is the use of chance "in the creation of works with multiple modes of performance."[9] The first is more characteristic of cinema, while the second is more relevant in music. Strictly speaking, narrative cinema cannot eliminate some kinds of randomness in its form. Even if it is shot in a studio with, for example, highly artificial settings and well-composed images, each take of a particular shot is singular and unrepeatable because it depends on the live character's momentary state of mind and behavior. This is the theatrical principle of randomness. But a film can push this principle way beyond the capacity of any other art to make it its constitutive element. By using natural locations, allowing the characters to improvise their dialogues, and letting the characters' random decisions determine the story, modern cinema extensively incorporated uncontrolled representation of physical reality into its aesthetic composition. One important trend in modern cinema was to make live reality secrete an artistic composition as if its main goal was the disappearance of the distinction between artificial aesthetic form and natural beauty.

I want to approach the question of randomness more from the point of view of how the film was created, rather than as how the film thematizes the problem of chance. After all, whatever ways the artist chooses to create his

9. Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, 105–121, quotation on 109.

work, it is the coherence of the end result that counts. Overall and multilayered coherence will always overshadow the effect of randomness stemming from the creative process. The innovation of a certain type of modern film narrative, especially of those films relating in one way or another to the new wave in this domain, is to make chance a crucial element in the plot. But this theme of chance as the basis of the story will unfold more radically in some postmodern narratives. So, the reason why I will elaborate on this problem is that I will consider this compositional element as a feature of modern narratives in which it is different not so much from classical cinema as from postmodern narrative. The problem of chance interests us here not from the point of view of the "past," that is, its relationship to the classical narrative, but from the point of view of the "future": what is the specificity of the use of chance and accidents in modernist narrative as compared to postmodern film narratives?

In a strict sense chance as a narrative element is an organic part of more than one narrative form. Chance as a theme is far from being just a modernist invention. Unforeseen encounters, sudden natural catastrophes, accidental misunderstandings are all obvious tools in all kinds of narratives from ancient mythology to fairy tales and the bourgeois novel. Accidental events in a classical narrative serve as an obstacle that the protagonist has to overcome to restore order in the world. Accidents function as a kind of test through which the world manifests its real nature and by which the viewer or the reader can better understand how things work in extraordinary situations. We might say that chance in the classical narrative is a provocation of the laws of nature and the society. Accidents in a classical narrative therefore confirm the ordinary laws of causality.

Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959) is one of the most extreme cases of classical narrative's use of the theme of chance. Hitchcock builds a story based on a series of banal accidental coincidences, which finally lead to someone's being mistaken for another person. That mistake triggers a chain of events where predictable causal logic is restored. The film then follows the logic of an ordinary mystery plot until the last scene in which Hitchcock suddenly suppresses all causal linkages: the heroes are saved, but we never learn how. The film consists of a series of incredible coincidences and accidents, which however lead to an ending that is logical and has the element of necessity according to all the classical generic rules, yet it occurs as a miracle: the protagonist finds the woman who was missing from his life at the beginning. The "order of life" is that this should happen in every man's life sooner or later no matter the miraculous perepiteia it takes. If "that is the way it

goes," even the wildest improbabilities can lead to a "necessary" outcome. With this last scene Hitchcock makes fun of generic motivation, but, he also shows that generic motivation is in fact nothing but an abstract causal pattern that overrules momentary realistic probability.[10]

The role of chance in modern narrative is essentially different. The function of accidents in modern films is not to confirm but to question causality and to demonstrate the fundamental unpredictability of the way things happen in the world. Accidents remain on the phenomenological level in modernist narrative, that is to say, they lose their "deeper" necessity. The goal of classical narrative is that at the end the viewer forgets about the random character of accidents, whereas the goal of modernist narrative is to impress upon the viewer the dramatic effect of accidents, which is why accidents occur often at the end of stories. The best example of this use of chance can be found in Claude Chabrol's *Les cousins* (1959), which ends with one of the cousins accidentally shooting dead the other by pointing the gun on him in fun without knowing that the gun is loaded.

Chance remains a central element in the postmodernist narratives as well. The difference is that postmodern use of chance demonstrates that an accident is not a disaster but the manifestation of an alternative reality. At the end of a classical narrative the viewer concludes, "Whatever happened, that is the way things should be." At the end of a modernist narrative the viewer says, "Everything could as well have been different." And a typical postmodernist narrative in fact shows how the same thing can be different at the same time, or simply shows an alternate version of the same story.

It is not chaos that manifests itself in modernist narrative's approach to chance but the fact that the freedom of "the individual" cannot be recon-

10. Bordwell makes a distinction between "realistic motivation" deriving from the logical causal expectations raised by a specific plot turn, and "transtextual" or "generic motivation" deriving from expectations raised by the spectator's knowledge about what types of events usually take place in a given genre (see Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 36). This distinction is entirely functional with respect to the analysis of a particular plot composition. On a more abstract level, however, we can see that rules of genres are merely generalized realistic motivations. If a young man and woman meet at the beginning of a film the most probable scheme for what they will do is that they fall in love with each other at once but probably never happen to make love (melodrama), fall in love and make love at the end (romantic comedy), make love and part later (modern melodrama), do nothing but make love at length (pornographic movie), save each other's life and then fall in love in the end (action movie), etc. All of these are realistic and plausible cause-and-effect chains. Such schemes are typical of "how things usually happen in real life." In a carefully written plot that does not play with chance as does the plot of *North by Northwest*, generic patterns are always motivated realistically, so they are harder to distinguish.

ciled with the laws of human nature and society. Freedom appears as a dangerous chaos from the point of view of society, and society appears from the point of view of "the individual" as a machine, the laws of which are hidden and can strike at any moment. Classical narratives show how social order is capable of incorporating the individual, however extravagant he may be, while modern narratives show how the freedom of "the individual" is crushed by the social order. Postmodern narratives (insofar as they touch on the problem of chance) show that in fact the social order is unpredictable not only for "the individual," but that it is also essentially chaotic, so in one way or another, freedom finds its way in alternative (virtual) universes. Postmodernism returns to the idea of the "higher necessity" of chance, not in order to manifest the underlying deterministic order, but to express an underlying indeterminism or chaos. Between classical and postmodernist narrative's ontological approach, we find the essentially epistemological approach of modernism. Chance does not rule modernist narratives; it erupts at important points as the manifestation of the clash between ordinary expectations and the unpredictability of freedom.

In a strict sense, one finds very few cases in modern cinema in which real chance plays a crucial role in the narrative. In most cases we see of an unprepared, unpredictable, or unexplained turn of events, whose reasons could be decipherable if the plot prepared the audience for what will happen. A typical example of the modernist conception of the role of chance in the narrative is Bertolucci's first feature film, *The Grim Reaper* (1962), based on Pasolini's original idea. The film tells the story of an investigation about the murder of a prostitute. A detective, who does not appear on screen and appears only as a disembodied voice, interrogates six people who were seen in the vicinity of the murder scene around the time it occurred. Just like in Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950), the film follows the respective recounting of the events from the points of view of the six interrogated, one of whom turns out to be the perpetrator of the crime. The comparison with *Rashomon*, however, holds water only initially. First, Bertolucci's film tells not the same story in six different versions, but six different stories that cross one another at a given place in a given moment. Second, unlike in *Rashomon*, where the different versions contradict each other and where we can find no "true" version that would overrule the other contradicting narratives, in Bertolucci's film the six different narratives are like different pieces of the same puzzle. At the end we find out the whole truth; nothing is left hidden. Bertolucci even reveals the discrepancies between the stories narrated by the characters. Sometimes their recounting contradicts what the film shows. But it does not make a difference if the characters lie, since Bertolucci's film

is not about the subjective or objective character of storytelling, which is Kurosawa's main concern in *Rashomon*. However, Bertolucci's film is not a "whodunit" story that gives full satisfaction at the end. His main concern is to compare the six stories in order to understand what could have led to a murder in one case rather than in the other. His goal was to show a situation in which an important event, a murder, that usually has a clear cause, in fact becomes accidental in the light of other stories that did not result in this murder but could have led to it. In a way, all of the characters' stories contain elements that make each of them a suspect. All of them had something in their day and in their life that could have led to serious consequences. At the end it appears that committing a murder was already a matter of chance for all of them. Five of the six were involved with some smaller crime (stealing, fighting). Four of them managed to get away without resorting to lethal means. The sixth killed a prostitute, while, just like the others, all he wanted was to steal her purse. He was not a premeditated murderer, just an ordinary fellow like the rest of them. The murder happened for no particular reason, or by accident, just as it was by accident that the other stories did not result in murder. The film is much more concerned with showing that everything could have happened differently than with showing the causal chain that led to the murder. This film sophisticatedly mixes the investigation pattern that supposes close cause-and-effect relations with a narrative conception where chance is the main motivation for important events.

Chance and necessity are not contradictory terms in *The Grim Reaper*. The story depicts a world in which consistency means that anything can happen and where chance is the rule. This idea appeared first in the French new wave, where it determined the most important plot turns. For example, in *Breathless* both the killing of the policeman and Michel's death are due to coincidences and unpredictable behavior. Michel was not a killer, just a petty car thief. Originally, the police were not after him, he just got nervous seeing the police officer directing the traffic. He did not have a gun, it just happened to be in the car. And he did not have a particular reason to shoot, he could have fled, too. As regards his death, he already wanted to give himself up to the police, he did not want to continue fleeing. His friend threw a gun after him, and when he turned back to pick it up, he got shot dead. In general, we might say that if death occurs in new wave films, it occurs unpredictably. More precisely: disaster lingers on throughout the stories, but when it occurs, it is unexpected.[11] The novelty of Pasolini and

11. On unexpected deaths in new wave films, see A. B. Kovács, *Metropolis, Párizs* (Budapest: Képző művészeti Kiadó, 1992), 147–55.

Bertolucci's story is that it makes chance not only the motivation of important turns, but also a principle of a whole way of life. It connects traditional Italian neorealist style with modern chance-motivated narrative technique in the modern investigation genre.

More than one modern film playfully includes chance as the manifestation of the aleatoric principle or of unpredictability. In Varda's *The Creatures* (1966) the two protagonists' acts are determined by a manipulator's casting of a die.[12] And Robbe-Grillet's *Trans-Europ-Express* (1966) demonstrates the incalculable nature even of fictional heroes. A filmmaker (played by Robbe-Grillet himself) makes up a story during a train trip while we can see the story as he tells it. Increasingly, there are disturbing elements that diverge from what the director narrates, as if he cannot control the trajectory of his own story.

What we find in some postmodern film narratives is that they take one step further in developing the theme of chance. They make chance the ruling order not only of a particular social environment or mentality, as in *The Grim Reaper,* but they also generalize it by making it appear as the only substantial organizing element in the world. Just to name some examples, one might think of films such as Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Blind Chance* (1987) and *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991), Ildikó Enyedi's *My Twentieth Century* (1988) and *Magic Hunter* (1994), Alain Resnais's *Smoking/No Smoking* (1993), Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run* (1998), and Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994). These films can be separated into two main variants. In one, chance is the only ruling order. At every turn of the plot chance plays a crucial role (*Pulp Fiction, My Twentieth Century, Magic Hunter*). In the other, the film consists of alternative versions of the same story pattern where everything depends on accidents, which may veer the story in one direction or another (*Blind Chance, The Double Life of Veronique, Smoking/No Smoking, Run Lola Run*). But in a more hidden way, a structure of parallel alternatives can be found also in some films of the first type: *My Twentieth Century* tells the stories of two siblings separated in their childhood. Since it was pure chance that determined their circumstances, their lives can be interpreted as one another's alternatives. Just like *Pulp Fiction,* where the different stories of violence crossing each other by accident can be understood as different version on the theme of the relationship between chance and violence.

12. A similar idea is found in Hungarian director Gyula Gazdag's film *Bástyasétány, 'hetvennégy* (*Singing on the Treadmill*, 1974), where the characters' destiny is dependent on the caprices of two manipulators who supervise and control their lives.

But the clearest example of the postmodern narrative's approach to chance is Tykwer's *Run Lola Run.* The film's story is told in three different versions. There are certain deviations in the story relative to accidental encounters, and the versions differ from each other according to when Lola arrives at these junctures. The manner in which the accidental encounters occur determines how the story will continue and how it will end. There is not even a hidden "master story" that tells how things happened "in reality," like in *Rashomon* or *The Grim Reaper;* Lola's story exists in three alternative versions each as plausible as the others. The role of chance here is not to confirm the rule of order by showing that what should happen happens anyway, like in classical narrative, nor to demonstrate the dramatic disaster caused by unpredictability, as in modernist narratives that show what should happen accidentally does not happen, or what should not happen happens accidentally. Tykwer's film wants to show that nothing that happens happens because that is the way it "should be." Every event is a version of an infinite number of virtual alternatives that are plausible and necessary the same way as the one that became reality, just like in a computer game. And the reason why one of the equally possible alternatives becomes reality is pure chance.

A narrative structure, based on alternate realities, can be found from the early 1960s on in modern cinema. However, the postmodern approach of narrative alternatives is very different from what we find in modern narrative serialism, such as in some of Alain Resnais's and Alain Robbe-Grillet's films. In the *nouveau roman* films, narrative parallelism is always related to subjectivity and to uncertainty of knowledge. Alternatives come into being because narrative mixes different sources of consciousness or subjective knowledge and objective reality. Therefore their main subject matter in this type of narrative is the problem of the *fake* or the *lie,* and the main question these films ask is, "which one of the alternatives is *true* or *real?*" Films in which this theme explicitly comes to the fore include Resnais's *Muriel* (1963), and *Stavisky* (1974) and Robbe-Grillet's *The Man Who Lies* (1968).[13] Even in *Last Year at Marienbad* the mutually contradictory alternative solutions are not conceived as existing side by side. X, the "Stranger," tells something to A, the "Woman," that is true or not. One of the options is always stronger than the other. One cancels out the other, like when the narrator decides to go back and not to kill the woman. One of the possible versions is supposed to

13. On the question of the fake and the lie in modern narratives, see Deleuze, *The Time Image,* especially the chapter "The Power of the False."

be "real" and final. We just cannot tell which one it is. When talking about *Last Year at Marienbad*, neither Resnais nor Robbe-Grillet left open the possibility that both solutions (whether or not X and A met in Marienbad last year) are plausible, although their opinion diverged as to which solution they thought was more likely to be true. According to Robbe-Grillet, "to the question, 'Did anything happen last year?' my answer is: 'Probably, not,' and Resnais's is 'Probably, yes.' What we have in common is this 'probably.'"[14] "Probably" means, it is either one way or the other, we don't know for sure. This is a typically modernist approach. The postmodernist approach would be "both contradictory options are true at the same time." This is why chance does not have a function in the modernist version of parallel narratives. And in films where chance does have a function we do not find parallel, mutually contradictory narratives. Chance in the modernist approach makes a final and irrevocable decision, and that is the source of its dramatic effect.

It follows from both classical and postmodern approaches to narrative that stories have an unambiguous closure. Classical narratives take place in the only one possible world. Postmodern narratives take place in a series of possible worlds, each of which is unambiguous. The universe of modernist narratives is the single possible world of classical narratives, but it is essentially uncertain, unpredictable, and incalculable. This leads us to the next general particularity of the modernist way of narration.

Open-Ended Narrative

Narrative closure is the point where order is restored in the universe of the plot. It can be a new order, but most often it is the original order that was disrupted by an event triggering a plot, which will be restored. One of modernist narrative's well-known particularities employed in many modern films is to withhold closure from the plot. This device can be found in all genres, all narrative forms, and in all styles, and although it is typical of the late modern period, it is not a necessary condition of modernist narrative. On the contrary, many highly modern films provide conventional narrative closure (*Breathless*, to begin with, but all the films of Tarkovsky, and Fellini also). Even some of the *nouveau roman* films have narrative closure, such as *Last Year at Marienbad*, *Muriel*, or *Trans-Europ-Express*. By contrast, many films made in this period do not share much with modernism other than their lacking of narrative closure. Buñuel, for example, whose films are not

14. *Le Monde*, 29 August 1961.

particularly modern in their styles or their narrative forms, was one of the most consistent users of open-ended narratives. Truffaut also left his first, more or less stylistically classical, film, *The 400 Blows* (1959), unfinished, but probably the most radical example of open-ended narrative is Milos Forman's first feature film, *Black Peter* (1963), which ends on an interrupted sentence. Among the great modernist auteurs, Antonioni's great period films all have undetermined endings. In fact, this is one of the main features in his films that divide his premodern and modernist periods.

Often open-ended structure has to do with the notion of unpredictability or uncertainty manifested in the story. This is the case in the films of Buñuel, Resnais, and Robbe-Grillet that include the feature of open-endedness. Unclosed ending is due to narrative ambiguity also in Bertolucci's *The Spider's Stratagem* (1970). There is, however, another reason why modern narratives tend to appear unfinished. This has to do with an overall structure of dramaturgy.

Narrative Trajectory Patterns: Linear, Circular, Spiral

Usually, theoretical literature about narrative forms use the concepts of "linear" and "nonlinear" narratives referring to whether the plot follows a chronological order of cause and effect. Bordwell has a more nuanced explanation of narrative linearity. On the one hand, he links this term to the causal coherence of the plot construction: "the classical scene continues or closes off cause-effect developments left dangling in prior scenes while also opening up new causal lines for future development."[15] On the other hand, narrative linearity refers to the tendency of classical narratives to "develop toward full and adequate knowledge." Linearity in this light means a chronological, causal, and conceptual continuity leading towards a closed set of relevant narrative information. Thus, linearity is not only a sequential order, it has a direction as well. This aspect of linearity directs attention to a problem that will be important to us here.

Linearity conceived as a relatively straight line leading from one point to another has a close relationship with the full understanding of the story. Full knowledge is possible only if the story ends at a point at which no more relevant information can be gathered about the story. That is the point from which "another story begins." Another story involves another motivation system. The lovers, as soon as they get married, have different goals, hence different motivations than when their goal was to arrive at marriage. A story

15. Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 158.

that can be "fully understood" starts with some emerging goals and motivations and ends with their disappearance. Both the emergence and the disappearance of the goals and motivations are attached to a significant change. In general what one can call a *beginning* of a story is a significant change in the way things usually happen in the world of the story, which provides the protagonists with new goals and motivations. And what we call an ending refers to another significant change, after which no important events occur that could affect the causal chain in between the two, thereby canceling the goals and motivations driving the protagonist throughout the story. What I call here a *linear trajectory* is an aspect of the narrative in which the closing situation is *significantly* different from the starting situation (the murderer is found, the lovers are reunited, etc.). By "significant" difference I mean a difference that is a result of a solution to a conflict. For the sake of not confusing the meanings of the term "linearity" we might also call this form the *problem-solving* narrative, since the ending situation is typically a solution to a problem or to a series of problems that are presented at the beginning of the story.

Not all narratives tell stories that take place between two significant changes, and not all narratives that have a "beginning" and an "ending" have them the way classical narration does. That is where "full knowledge" plays a role. Classical narration predominantly arrives at an understanding of the story where all important information has been revealed. However, there are stories in which—although we know more at the end than we did at the beginning—we never find out how the main problem fueling the plot could have been resolved, because the story comes back to its starting point without a solution only to end there. That is what I call a *circular trajectory* as opposed to the linear one. Its distinguishing feature is that the ending situation is not significantly different from that of the beginning. If a linear narrative is problem-solving, a circular narrative is *descriptive.* We understand the fundamentals of the initial situation, but we do not understand how conflicts generated by this situation could be resolved. This narrative form was prevalent in neorealism. Examples are quite obvious: *The Bicycle Thief* (1948), *The Earth Trembles* (1948), or *Umberto D.* (1952), and many others. In all of these stories the main heroes want to solve one or more problems, but failing in their attempts they arrive back where they started with no more hope to improve their situation. In the meantime, they go through a series of situations that could lead to a positive result but end up resulting in dead ends. That is how their entire situation is disclosed. A circular or descriptive pattern is generally used in narratives that describe not the process that does not lead to the solution of a problem but that discloses the important

elements of a certain conflict. This occurs either because the character cannot reach his initial goal or because there is simply no goal to reach.

There is yet a third narrative "trajectory shape," which I will call *spiral trajectory,* which unfolded during the modernist period. We said that the problem-solving form is based on the emergence of a specific mission. At the beginning of the story there appears a problem that has to be resolved. This problem is resolved at the end, for better or worse. The important thing here is that the conflict that was generated by the problem is resolved in one way or another at the end. There are stories in which the initial problem, although partially solved, triggers another conflict that reproduces the initial problem in a different situation. The characters go through a series of attempts to resolve the problem, but each time they reach only a temporary solution. They constantly replicate new situations where the same problem remains to be solved. The conflict reemerges over and over again. The solution in these stories is typically not the elimination of the conflict but the elimination of the characters who cannot solve the conflict. What we have here is basically a series of variations on the initial situation that bear a given problem, and the number of the variations is infinite. One of the early examples of this spiral trajectory is Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero* (1948). The film's story is about a young boy wandering amidst the ruins of postwar Berlin trying to provide for his family and himself. As he finds that he has been cheated and abused by all the people from whom he expected help, he throws himself down from the top of a ruined building. Actually, this film vacillates between circular and spiral form as the situation is not evolving a great deal from beginning to end, which is characteristic of the circular form. However, the boy's suicide significantly alters the situation quite in the way later spiral narratives resolve their situations: by eliminating the protagonist.

A clear example of the spiral form is Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* (1962). The beginning of the story describes the friendship of two young men and a young woman. Step by step their little company develops into a ménage à trois, which all want to resolve in one way or another. The story goes through different attempts to clarify the situation, but all of these attempts fail, and the young woman has to face the same dilemma over and over again. The world changes around them, they find themselves always in a new situation (before the war, after the war, before the child is born, after the child is born), but each situation reproduces the same conflict. It is clear that the story could go on like this forever with infinite ways to stage the basic conflict. There is no linear causal chain in the story that could lead to a solution. Chronologically the narrative is linear, and there is also a causal continuity

in it. There are no undisclosed causes or unexplained turns in the plot. But this causal continuity does not lead to a logical solution; it has no direction. Problem-solving narratives may finish when the problem is solved. Descriptive narratives may end when all the necessary information about a situation is disclosed. In spiral narratives a solution remains temporary, and full knowledge about the situation does not help starting "another story." The only way the narrative can be ended is to cut the vicious circle unexpectedly at some point. Truffaut puts a sudden end to his film by the unexpected suicide of the woman who drags one of her lovers along with her.

From the point of view of dramatic construction, the important thing in both the circular and the spiral forms is that there is no decisive turn possible that could either change the initial situation or make this change eliminate the initial problem. After each episode there could be an infinite number of other variations on the same theme. The difference between them is that while in circular narratives the characters never come to a solution, in spiral narratives there is no solution to their problem at all. Both circular and spiral forms can be open-ended. Examples of open-ended circular narratives include Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel* (1962), Forman's *Black Peter* (1963), Antonioni's *L'avventura* (1960), and Wenders's *The Goalie's Fear of the Penalty Kick* (1972). Examples of open-ended spiral narratives include Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* (1959), Fellini's *La dolce vita* (1960), Bergman's *Persona* (1966), and Godard's *Week-end* (1967).

:5:

Genre in Modern Cinema

Narrative techniques frequently used in modern cinema became fashionable not as self-contained play with the form. They are the most appropriate tools for telling specific stories. For example, stories about itinerant characters, having different encounters with various people, and exploring different environments naturally involve episodic narrative form. Stories in which someone is in search of something or someone missing or wants to elucidate some kind of mystery are favorable to elliptical narration. Stories focusing on a character's state of mind or on her problems as she searches to find a way out of an existential situation are the ones that are the more likely to resort to dissolving the difference between past and present, reality and imagination. Stories emphasizing the unpredictable character of the world are likely to incorporate chance as a motivation of important events. All of this makes us suppose that in modern cinema we will find certain recurring story patterns just as popular genres are patterns for recurring stories in classical entertainment or classical art cinema.

Modern art cinema tells stories about the "individual" who has lost his or her contact with the surrounding world. Stories about the lonely, alienated, or suppressed individual are endless, but the forms in which these stories can be made intelligible are not. These forms are the essential genres of modernism.

Modern films, just like modern narrative in general, are said to transgress the limits of narrative genres and conventions.[1] The modern artist's goal is

1. Peter Bürger says for example: "According to the premodern conception of art the concept of form is linked to universal characteristics of genres . . . In turn, the modern concept of form is strictly linked to each particular work, it refers to the individuality of

to construct a form that does not comply with previous rules, and at the same time the constructed form remains unique and unrepeatable. As Alain Robbe-Grillet put it, "each new work constitutes and destroys at the same time its own rules of functioning."[2] In other words, the role of the modern artwork is not only to transgress traditional artistic conventions but also to thwart the solidification of any kind of artistic convention.

Nevertheless, even the most esoteric art-film form was not without some roots in traditional genres, nor could modernism avoid the repetition of some of its most successful forms, which resulted in the crystallization of what could be called the "modernist patterns." The relationship between modernism and genre logic cannot simply be reduced to rule-breaking and deconstruction. Modernist cinema utilized and freely combined conventional genre patterns following all of their national and universal variations, and created its own modernist art-film patterns suitable for the norms of neomodern art. Although one cannot deny that breaking the rules of classical narrative is one of modernism's principal specificities, there are some typical and recurrent narrative schemes that represent the basis of modern art film production shaping specific genres that are characteristic of modern films.

In the works of early-period modern auteurs the roots of traditional genres are easily discernible. Antonioni and Fellini start out of Italian neorealist-style melodrama. The leading French new wave directors, Godard, Truffaut, and Chabrol, built their stories around crime and adventure clichés. Bergman, up until the 1970s, mainly used a Strindberg type of psychological drama that was already at that time a genre in Swedish film culture. Tarkovsky's first success was with the traditional war film genre and Nikita Mikhalkov's was in a western set in the Russian Civil War. Up until the early 1960s it seemed as if modern cinema did nothing with genre logic but escape it. There was only one new narrative scheme introduced by early modern cinema, based on the *nouveau roman* technique of "objective narration." However, already during the mid-1960s many "second wave" modern auteurs who started their careers in modernism after 1962 not only used isolated narrative or stylistic solutions introduced by the first wave modern masters but also took over from them entire story patterns or hero types. For example, Tony Richardson's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962) is not only the first real "new wave"-style British film, but its story is directly inspired by Truffaut's *The 400 Blows*. It is almost like a sequel to

---

the work, which has nothing to do with a generic determination whatsoever." Bürger, *La prose de la modernité*, 23.

2. Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman* (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1963), 11.

Truffaut's film, or an English version of it. Forman admits being strongly inspired when making his *Black Peter* by Olmi's *The Job*. Bernardo Bertolucci's second film, *Before the Revolution* (1964), is constructed very much like one of Godard's early self-reflective essay films. In fact, Bertolucci asserted that "when I made my first film in 1964, I considered myself more of a French director than an Italian director. I was influenced by the new wave and their experiments with cinema at the time." [3] The New German Cinema's first international revelation in 1966 was Alexander Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966), which is a direct replica of Godard's *My Life to Live* (1962). By the early 1970s, and with the appearance of the third and fourth wave of modern filmmakers, the recurrence of some narrative forms became more and more evident. Their rules were not as rigid as in the case of popular genres, simply because innovation and originality were modern film auteurs' first-order artistic ideals. Strictly speaking, each film could be considered as a personal variation of a type of story, situation, or stylistic form. But after all it is now clear that modern art cinema used only a finite number of them. What follows is a description of the most frequent genres and plot patterns in modern films.

Melodrama and Modernism

One of the most widespread modern art-film patterns had its origins in classical melodrama. Melodrama had foremost importance in the development of the art-film practice. Together with the crime genre, it was the main genre that bridged the gap between commercial popular cinema and art cinema ever since this distinction appeared, and this was the genre that not only survived modernism, but survived *within* modernism too. In other words, we will find something that is like the modernist version of classical melodrama. The first thing I want to show is that melodramatic structure is not at all alien to modernism; on the contrary, it is perfectly appropriate for the modernist project in the cinema and it is one of the generic sources of modern narratives, even if modern films usually do not use the full scale of melodramatic paraphernalia.

Melodrama is commonly identified with stories provoking intense emotional response from the viewer. This emotional intensity is a consequence of a special narrative scheme. Melodrama is a dramatic form in which the conflict explodes between incommensurable forces, where a lonely human

3. Cited by Ric Gentry, "Bertolucci Directs Tragedy of a Ridiculous Man," in *Millimeter* (December 1981): 58. In actual fact, by 1964 Bertolucci had completed his second film.

faces powers of nature or society, before which she is helpless and either condemned to lose right from the outset or wins due to a miracle. This power can be physical (fatal illness, accident), social (war, poverty, class difference) or psychic (strong love, murderous hatred, fatal addiction, moral corruption).

Melodrama as a genre appeared at the end of the eighteenth century and referred to a dramatic genre with musical accompaniment staging emotional scenes and involving some kind of unpredictable, fatal plot twist. The melancholic, grim and pathetic emotional atmosphere of melodrama was closely associated with its narrative essence: the helpless human faced with repressive forces of the exterior world. In early melodramas this emotional atmosphere had the function of prefiguring the unexpected, fatal turn evoked by invincible external power. Melodrama developed in nineteenth-century theater as a popular dramatic form with musical accompaniment that had the function of expressing excessive emotions provoked by a fatal situation. Melodrama has always had to do with the lack or insufficiency of words and verbal expression, which is why grand gestures and music play a central role. Moreover, melodrama has always been about the suffering of an innocent victim, even when the fault of the suffering lies with the victim herself, like in case of self-sacrifice. This is why a happy ending in a melodrama comes always unexpectedly, by chance or by miracle.

Melodrama is basically fatalistic. In contrast to what melodrama's high emotionality would suggest, melodramatic narrative can be fitted to stories other than those representing emotional conflicts. The fatalist character of melodrama is well suited for all kinds of social, political, and historical narratives. Moreover, the naturalist novel, drama, and cinema support the melodramatic structure all the more because they also stage great powers of nature, society, and human instincts. The conflict in naturalist narrative is a clash between the objective and unsurpassable laws of society or human nature and a helpless individual, and this type of conflict can be well adapted to the melodramatic form. Yet, naturalist style very rarely yields to the emotional saturation characteristic of melodrama. And the reason is that naturalism focuses on objective laws rather than on the individual's perspective. It is the individualism of melodrama that is the source of its highly emotional character. And it is only from naturalist objective fatalism that melodramatic emotionality, which is the result of its subjective, emotional fatalism, may appear as "excess." In reality, it is part of melodrama's individualist approach. And this is the key for understanding the relationship between melodrama and modernism.

Cognitive theorist Torben Grodal proposes a useful approach to melodrama that illustrates how melodrama can be operational in the modernist context. Grodal highlights two aspects of a melodramatic attitude: *passive response* and *subjective, mental perception.* Melodrama stages an insoluble conflict between the lonely human and the big objective power from the point of view of a *passive* perception of the world. While in naturalism both the world and the victim-subject remain exterior and objective to the representation, in melodrama the repressive power of the objective world is represented as a *subjective perception*, it is "experienced as a mental event."

> [I]f we are transformed into a passive object for the objective laws, the hypothetical-enactive identification is weakened or blocked, and the experience loses its character of being rational and exterior-objective, and, by negative inference, is experienced as a mental event. In the great melodramatic moments in *Gone with the Wind*, the agents lose their full ability to act in the world, which is therefore only experienced as sensation, as input, and so remains a mental phenomenon.[4]

Grodal supposes that this passive, subjective experience is the source of the emotional saturation of the melodrama. In simple terms: the lonely subject is not only helpless before repressive powers, but her helplessness is staged as a passive process, a mental perception, or an emotional state. Because the difference in the acting potential between the agent and the environment is so great, at important points the melodramatic hero becomes inactive, suffers the difference, and processes it emotionally. In *Casablanca* (1942), Rick is a perfect melodramatic hero: in the crucial moment, when Ilsa collapses and offers herself to him, instead of grasping the opportunity to actively reconstruct his happiness, he chooses to passively withdraw before the greater powers of historical mission and marital fidelity (Ilsa must remain with Laszlo so that he can accomplish his political mission respected by Rick himself). He chooses closure rather than continuation, staying rather than fleeing, loneliness rather than happy coupling, hiding rather than accumulating power and wealth. Rick and Ilsa are incomparably unhappier at the end than at the beginning, but they just cannot find any positive solution to their desperate situation other than remaining unhappy. There is only an emotional response to their frustration caused by helplessness. For fate cannot be shifted, the melodramatic hero overcomes helplessness by an excessive emotional response. High emotional amplitude is therefore not an exaggeration of melodrama, but it belongs to the genre's inherent

4. Torben Grodal, *Moving Pictures: A New Theory of Film Genres, Feelings, and Cognition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 257.

representation system: *understanding fate and helplessness through melodrama is to understand it through pure passive emotional experience.*

The active-passive "shifter" introduced by Grodal is extremely enlightening. For what is essential here is that passive mental experience can be not only emotional but intellectual too. A purely intellectual processing of life-threatening helplessness may provoke the same passive, subjective experience. Passive experience before a greater power may be transformed into other cognitive states, too, not only highly emotional ones, and the melodramatic narrative structure may remain operational. Here we must make clear that we are speaking of emotions *represented* in melodrama and not of those provoked by it in the viewer. Classical melodrama provokes emotional response by the viewer by representing them. Modern melodrama, as we will soon see, provokes emotional states on the part of the viewer by radically withdrawing representation of emotions, which is why the emotion raised by modern melodrama is always some kind of anxiety.

The emphasis on passive subjective experience lying at the heart of the melodramatic form explains, for example, the continuity between the Italian melodrama series of the 1930s, referred to as the "white telephone," and Antonioni's high modernism. It makes clear how Italian neorealism as a fundamentally naturalist narrative universe could unfold out of the melodramatic narrative conventions of Italian cinema of the 1940s and incorporate them; and also how the same melodramatic structure could survive in the introverted and increasingly mental character of modern narrative cinema. Naturalist melodrama is born when the helpless agent confronted by external powers is no longer individualized through her mental or emotional states and is staged as an *active* part of the very environment of which she is a helpless victim. A typical example of naturalist cinema using a melodramatic structure is Vittorio De Sica's neorealist *The Bicycle Thief* (1948). Ricci is not individualized through his psychological character and emotions but through his belonging to a certain environment of which he is an active part (trying to find his bicycle). Nevertheless, active as he is, he remains a lost victim right from the start. The social order is stronger than him. Classical melodrama reemerges out of naturalism, when the victim of exterior powers is individualized through her passive emotional response to her helpless social situation. A typical example of the post-neorealist classical melodrama is Fellini's *La strada* (1954), where Gelsomina's story, which starts as a social struggle for life, finishes as a story of emotional and spiritual redemption. And, finally, we can speak of modern melodrama when the hero in the melodramatic structure of naturalism is reindividualized either by her mental and *not purely emotional* representations of her situation or

Fig. 6. Giulietta Masina in *La strada* (Federico Fellini, 1954).

by complementing pure emotional response by other mental representations, such as dream, memory, or imagination. In other words, in modern cinema as far as it uses the melodramatic structure, the "mental event" of representing one's helplessness is shifted from a (conscious or unconscious) emotional dimension to another kind of (conscious or unconscious) mental

dimension. A typical example is Antonioni's *La notte*, where the characters' passivity throughout the story is due to a purely mental state of being unaware of the reason for their marital crisis.

We talk about modern intellectual melodrama when the protagonist finds herself faced with an existential situation that she cannot understand, and this lack of understanding provokes passivity, suffering, and anxiety. Very often in classical melodrama, too, the protagonist does not understand the cause of her suffering, but in modern melodrama characters do not even know that their situation is critical. They can feel their inability to act, but they do not know the reason why. All that is at stake in modern melodrama is *understanding helplessness*. And that is why modern intellectual melodrama most often provokes anxiety on the part of the viewer. Melodrama is a form of classical narrative that subjects the protagonist to dead-end situations where no *active* behavior can be effective. Classical melodramatic heroes keep trying to find a solution for a time, but sooner or later they give in and abandon themselves to pure emotional suffering. If there is a happy ending, it is not due to their efforts. It is always by miracle or by chance that the conditions change around them and the "bigger force" dissolves. The reaction of modern melodramatic heroes to the provocation of the environment is even more passive. It can be best characterized as a *mental* or *physical search*. Modern melodrama is a type of melodrama in which the protagonist's reaction amounts to searching for a way to intellectually *understand* the environment, which precedes or replaces physical reaction. The main cause of the protagonist's emotional distress in modern melodramas is not a concrete natural, social, or emotional catastrophe. No matter what concrete event triggers narrative action, it is but a superficial manifestation of a deeper and more general crisis for which no immediate physical reaction is possible. The only adequate immediate reaction is a passive intellectual response of searching for comprehension of the "general crisis" that will lead to a choice that can result in a physical reaction.

The reason why the characters in modern melodrama do not recognize their own desperate situations is to be found in the special form in which the "bigger power" appears in these films. One can speak of melodrama only if the environment represents a force incommensurate with the protagonist's powers. Incommensurate power in modern films has a particularity that differentiates it from any other type of melodrama. The "bigger power" in modern melodrama is represented by something that is stronger not by its presence but by its *absence*. What exactly is missing, however, is in most cases impossible to tell. One can name it only in general terms of positive human values: love, tenderness, emotions, security, human communica-

tion, or God. The power that protagonists of modern melodramas have to face is an existential *lack* of these *positive values*, and it is this lack that takes on the form of something invincibly strong. In the terms of existentialist philosophy this invincible power is called *Nothingness*. To explain his concept of nothingness in relation to modern cinema, we will need to turn to Sartre's major work of phenomenological existentialism, *Being and Nothingness* (1943), which had a profound effect on modern art, cinema included.

Excursus: Sartre and the Philosophy of Nothingness

Jean-Paul Sartre was one of the most influential living Western philosophers in the fifties and early sixties, and there is little doubt that his works had a major impact on contemporary art, especially drama, literature, and film. Many reasons explain the influence of his works on European art. He himself was a writer, and he publicized much of his views in dramas and novels propagating a sort of philosophical writing. He formulated existentialist philosophy on the level of everyday personal psychology, easy to translate into dramatic situations. He also made the case for a direct linkage between philosophy, art, and politics by advocating for an "engaged" literature. And finally, his philosopher persona also explains his influence. He was the prominent figure and the model of what can be called the "French intellectual": philosopher, writer, journalist, and politician all at the same time. He was a kind of spiritual leader, and even the French president De Gaulle addressed him as "Mon cher maître" (My dear master).[5]

The modern philosophical concept of "nothingness" appears in German romantic philosophy with Hegel, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche. An important aspect of this concept is that it is not simply conceived as something entirely alien to what exists but instead is inextricably linked to it. Nietzsche was the most radical interpreter of this notion; he made it an independent power that opposes the banality of life, and the acceptance of which is the precondition of the divine individual's power. Thus Nietzsche used "nothingness" as a tool for fighting metaphysics. This tool, however, turned out to be inappropriate for that purpose. The romantic conception of the autonomy of the individual is to make the individual a divine entity not subdued by any greater power alien to his own nature: the individual chooses, decides, challenges, opposes, and revolts against superhuman powers. However, the freedom of the romantic individual is limited by the fact that the source of

5. Charles De Gaulle to Jean-Paul Sartre, letter dated April 19, 1967, in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 7: 43.

his own divinity is precisely the superhuman nature of the greater power she opposes. Nietzsche understands the limits of the romantic conception and refuses the divine individual's dependence on the greater power. He says, "I was given new pride by my own "self," and that is what I teach: do not hide your head in the sand of heavenly things any longer. But carry around freely this earthly head, which gives sense to the Earth."[6] The idea that the subject-object opposition can be avoided by introducing singularity as defining human individuality appears at the dawn of modernism in Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche wants to anchor this "new pride" exclusively in the singularity of life without a metaphysical background. The individual subject becomes in this way the ultimate power independent of any metaphysical support. Interestingly enough, the singularity of the individual declared as the ultimate power of life cannot stand by itself. It becomes a power of opposition, an object of choice, as though subjective singularity were not able to fill out the space left empty by the ostracized superhuman powers. It is as though there remained some vacuum around the divine individual, in which another hitherto unknown superhuman power starts to develop: *nothingness*. Understood in this context, nothingness becomes the shade of vanished metaphysical powers.[7] This notion, born in the romantic philosophy of the nineteenth century, in spite of all attempts maintained the metaphysical subject-object dualism up until the emergence of postmodern philosophy. With Heidegger and finally with Sartre, nothingness becomes the central concept of existentialist philosophy, and especially in Sartrian existentialism it helps conserve the subject-object dualism thereby generating a new metaphysical myth. It is that myth that comprises the philosophical notion of nothingness, a subject matter well suited for representation in modern film.

Sartre attributes concrete content to the abstract notion of nothingness. He pulls this concept out of pure negativity and differentiates it from the simple emptiness of nonbeing. His conceptual operation is this: he makes

6. Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Budapest: Grill Károly, 1908), 38.

7. It was Henri Bergson who noted first that the romantic concept of nothingness was essentially of a metaphysical character: "For the source of the contempt of metaphysics regarding reality in duration is that metaphysics arrives at being through 'nothing,' because being in duration does not seem for metaphysics strong enough to overcome nonbeing and to assert itself," *Évolution créatrice*, 252. That is why Bergson considered it very important to deprive the concept of nothingness of any kind of relevance, and to prove that nothingness is only a subjective appearance. Considering the philosophy of the first half of the twentieth century, at least until the 1960s, we can say that he was not too successful in doing that.

nothingness the key concept of human relations and of the relationship of man to the world. He interprets nothingness as a product of human intentions and at the same time the essence of being. Nothingness for Sartre is not another world, nor is it beyond our world. He translates this concept into a series of everyday situations where man is alone, disappointed by his beliefs and expectations, desperately looking for something solid in a situation where his own identity is called into question. Sartre places nothingness right into the world "into the heart of being, like a worm."[8] Nothingness comes not after being as according to Hegel, and it is not beyond the world as for Heidegger. Nothingness, says Sartre, not only exists, but it exists within being together with it and at the same time. Nothingness is not a general logical or ontological dimension; it is rather the foundation of human being.

Sartre says, "It is the human being who gives birth to Nothingness."

Nothingness is created when a human wish or expectation is frustrated. Nothingness is not a general nonbeing, it is rather the nonbeing of something or of something that should be. In other words, nothingness is human expectation, human frustration, or human memory.[9] Hence, nothingness is not simply a negative category as the notion may suggest. All expectations, all disappointments, all memories are related to concrete contents. If my purse is empty, says Sartre, it is not empty in general, but money of an expected order of magnitude or perhaps of a certain exact amount is missing. When a classroom is empty, it is students, not racehorses, who are missing. And when I enter a café looking for Peter but I find only John, then Peter's absence is directly mediated by John's presence. This means that nothingness is directly represented by being. The final scene of Antonioni's *Eclipse* demon-

8. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénomologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 57.

9. Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, quotation on 65. At this point we cannot disregard the Bergsonian foundation of the Sartrian concept of nothingness. Bergson considered nothingness as something that is related to the function of the brain. Nothing for Bergson is but a logical operation, and he thereby reduced it to an element of consciousness relating man to the world. Bergson is firmly convinced that nothingness does not exist. Nothingness is but an illusion, a pure word, a consequence of lack of satisfaction. Bergson is therefore more direct than Sartre: "The concept of emptiness is born when human reflection is related to a past memory when already a new situation is in place. It is nothing else but a comparison of what is there with what could be there, in other words, a comparison of the full with the full." Bergson, *Évolution créatrice* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1930), 257. What Sartre says is not very different when he speaks about the human origins of nothingness, only he tries to recuperate the ontological weight of nothingness, which was denied by Bergson.

strates clearly Sartrian nothingness. The main motif of the film is constant desertion and disappearance. First Vittoria deserts Riccardo's apartment, then Riccardo himself disappears from the rest of the story. And in the final scene a lot of images can be seen from the meeting point where Vittoria and Piero are absent. We do not see the street, what we can see is their absence. The images of the well and of the street are the images of our frustrated expectation. We see directly their not-being-there, in other words, by seeing the street without them, we see nothingness produced by their absence.

Nothingness is a positive category in yet another sense. Between what was and what could be there is a hole, an empty space, where man is free to choose. Nothingness is an empty moment in the world, where man is liberated from his past and must choose. Hence, nothingness is the definition of freedom, it is what cancels out the past before the future: "In freedom man invalidates past and creates his own nothingness. . . . Nothingness is freedom intercalated between past and future." Free choice is based on nothingness because it obliges man to choose, but it does not influence the choice. Since choice is indeterminate it is incalculable for others as well as for ourselves. Incalculability for us is the source of our angst, and incalculability for others represents a danger. Freedom based on nothingness is thus the main power and the main source of danger regarding human relations. The other is the dangerous power of nothingness: "[Nothingness] is my being written into and rewritten by the freedom of the Other. As if there existed another dimension of my being from which I were separated by a radical Nothingness: and this Nothingness is the freedom of the Other." Nothingness as presented by something that is *missing* is the term through which man is related to the world and to others. This is how the Sartrian concept of nothingness becomes the expression of modern experience of human existence: lonely man, freed from his past, forced to choose and to look out for his own self, endangered by the freedom of others, constantly has to face the lack of sublime values, and this lack is incorporated by the concept of nothingness.[10]

The "modern authentic individual" is someone who accepts nothingness as the fundament of his/her freedom and gives up the search for traditional metaphysical values. The aversion of modernism to mass culture stems from the fact that modernism considers mass culture as avoiding facing the heart of being: nothingness. Mass culture considers the traditional forces of the sublime (God, nature, love, history, destiny) as continuing to work in the modern world. For postwar modernism the only sublime power that can be represented as working in the modern world is nothingness. The modern

10. Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, quotations on 76, 320.

individual cannot face God as a free individual, only as a member of a nation or a congregation, as a dependent individual. If the modern individual is free, it is possible only by facing nothingness.[11] According to the romantic conception the individual is someone who is capable of inner freedom and of choosing death over the insignificance of life. The modern individual is someone whose freedom is manifested by the capability of accepting the insignificance, the nothingness of life. Nothingness for modernism is not the opposite of life, like death in the romantic sense. Nothingness is death within life—life itself, that is. Within romanticism the individual is someone who can be independent from the surrounding world. For modernism the individual is someone who can look through the insignificance of life and can free herself of the angst caused by the nothingness of the world and accept her own life in the midst of this nothingness.

We find a nice illustration of the difference between romantic and modern attitudes to nothingness in two early films of Godard. One is *Breathless* (1960), the other is *Pierrot le fou* (1965). In *Breathless*, Patricia asks Michel what he would choose if he had a choice between grief and nothingness. Michel's answer is nothingness, Patricia's choice is grief. The real significance of this conversation becomes clear at the end of the film, when Patricia finally gives Michel up to the police, then begs him to escape. The fact that she does that is a direct consequence of her choice. She refuses to accept the idea of nothingness represented by Michel's life, but she feels sorry for him, which appears to her as a paradox. That drives her to the melodramatic act of begging him to escape. Michel, on the other hand, chooses Nothingness, which means that he does not want to run away anymore and expose himself to the bullets of the police. Patricia can accept Michel only as a romantic hero, and that is how she casts him when she betrays him. Michel's death is

11. Christian personalism at the beginning of the twentieth century attempted to avoid the dangerous consequences of this by doubling the self. Berdiaev suggested a separation of the self into two parts: the *individual*, dependent on the surrounding world, and the *persona*, independent of the material world and resembling God. The persona is free, but this freedom does not oppose the self to God. It is God who, within the self, opposes the material world: "It is within the self that the struggle between the world and God takes place." Nikolai Berdiaev, "The Persona," in Török Endre (szerk.), *Az orosz vallásbölcselet virágkora* (Budapest: Vigilia, 1988), II. kötet, 217. It is by this metapsychological fiction that Berdiaev tried to save individual freedom and at the same time avoid "nihilism," which is a dangerous consequence of individual freedom. Nevertheless he himself accepts that nihilism (in its Russian, and not Nietzscheian form) is quite close to personalism, as an unconscious and philosophically unfounded antecedent. Cf. Berdiaev, *L'idéé russe* (Paris: Maison MAME, 1969), 142.

Fig. 7. Not a romantic death: Jean-Paul Belmondo in *Pierrot le fou* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965).

a romantic death from Patricia's point of view, because this way he does not die for nothingness, he dies for love, which Patricia can accept, and which provides her with her choice: grief. That is why Patricia does not understand Michel's last word: "Tu es dégueulasse!" (You are disgusting!), and she repeats Michel's gesture to rub her mouth with her thumb: at this moment he has become her mythical romantic hero, who was ready to die for her. From Michel's point of view, however, this was not a romantic death at all. Not only did he not want to die for her, he did not want to die at all, he just wanted to give himself up to the police, who shot him because he reached for the gun laying on the pavement. He escaped not because he wanted to be a hero, rather because nothing made sense for him anymore once he was betrayed by Patricia. He was killed by chance, and that only made sense for Patricia looking for grief and melodrama.

We find similar ambiguity in *Pierrot le fou.* Only here, the ambiguity is within the same person. After a failed attempt to flee the banality of his everyday life Ferdinand realizes that there is no way of finding what he is looking for. His love betrays him, and very much in the same way as Michel, he comes to the conclusion that if authentic love is no longer possible life does not make sense anymore. But unlike Michel, he decides to commit a "romantic" suicide. He paints his face blue and wraps his head with sticks of dynamite. However, just as he lights the fuse, he mutters: "After all, I am an idiot!" and desperately attempts to put out the fuse—but a moment too late. Ferdinand realizes that after having devalued life, his death is worth nothing, either. There is no other choice: he has to accept nothingness, and he must continue to live.

In the final analysis Sartre makes a direct link between the concept of nothingness and fundamental existential experiences of modern man concerning loneliness and disappearance, which makes this concept susceptible to concrete artistic representation. Nothingness in Sartrian philosophy

becomes an essential and invisible ingredient in the phenomenological experience of everyday life. It is an invisible but perceptible dimension hiding behind physical reality. And cinema is a particularly appropriate medium to represent the tension between the two. No other medium can represent the physical surface of reality as meticulously as cinema, and no other medium can express the emptiness behind that surface as strongly. But it is in the intellectual melodrama that the philosophy of nothingness is the most productive. It is there that this concept finds a narrative place in a genre scheme as the bigger power before which the protagonist is helpless. Nothingness is the negative power of lost humanistic values.

There are direct and indirect ways of representing the power of loss as the general concept of nothingness. For example, in Bergman's modernist career the lack or loss of values appears in a variety of ways. In *Prison* (1949) it has a name: "hell on Earth," which is a particularly clear formulation of the Sartrian concept (nothingness in the midst of being). In later films Bergman utilizes a more "romantic" conception as he puts death (*The Seventh Seal*, 1957; *Wild Strawberries*, 1957) or the "absence of God" (*Through a Glass Darkly*, 1961, *Winter Light*, 1962) into the place of the "bigger power." But in *Persona* (1966) he clearly and directly gives it the name of nothingness: it is the only word Elisabeth, the protagonist can utter after a long period of silence at the end of the film. In Antonioni's career, from *Story of a Love Affair* (1950) to *Blow-Up* (1966), one can trace an even more linear evolution toward a clear formulation of the concept of nothingness. The human absence and disappearance becomes increasingly abstract, especially in *Eclipse* and *The Red Desert*, while in *Blow-Up* nothingness is a direct motive used as the central symbol of the film. And there is also a third film from 1966 in which the direct formulation of the concept of nothingness proves that at the peak of postwar modernism a major trend of modern cinema is constructed around it: this film is Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*. I will compare these three films in part 3 to show how they make the year 1966 an important turning point in the evolution of modern cinema through deep reflection on the place of the modern artist in the world.

A Modern Melodrama: Antonioni's *Eclipse* (1962)

In the previous examples we saw how the mere concept of nothingness can become a topic in itself. In most cases, however, and in modern melodrama typically, this is only a source of an underlying ideology mainly about human alienation. In the following example we will see how that works.

Among Antonioni's great period films, *Eclipse* is the most radical example of what can be called modern intellectual melodrama. Moreover, it exemplifies best all that I said about the role of the concept of nothingness in modern melodrama. Already the title evokes the disappearance of light and warmth: the central recurrent plot element of the story is human disappearance.

The story is divided into three loosely connected parts. After a nightlong argument Vittoria breaks up with her fiancé, Riccardo. When we meet them, they are already at the end and through the most difficult part of their conversation. "We have said everything we had to say," says Vittoria. Riccardo is still not ready to let her go, but he cannot make her change her mind. When he asks her why she wants to quit, all she replies is, "I don't know." That is her answer as well to the question about when she stopped loving him. All through the film that is the only thing she can say when she is asked about what she wants. The next part of the movie takes place on and around the stock market where she goes to find her mother. She tries to tell her about her breaking up with Riccardo, but her mother is too busy with her stocks to listen. There Vittoria meets a young, attractive, and dynamic broker, Piero, with whom she starts up a new relationship later in the story. But in this second part Antonioni concentrates on the events taking place at the stock exchange and the dramatic market crash pushing a lot of people, including Vittoria's mother, into bankruptcy. The stock market story is interrupted by a scene where Vittoria visits a neighbor just returned from Kenya. The third part tells the story of Vittoria's and Piero's aborted relationship. Both of them seem ready to start a relationship, but at the last moment Vittoria always withdraws. She repeats, she does not know why. She has the desire but she cannot find the emotional energy necessary to fulfill her desire. All through the story Vittoria is undecided and uncertain. Piero is a more simple case: all he is looking for is sexual contact. Emotional or intellectual contact does not matter for him. In the final scene their relationship ends. But it does not break up; it just vanishes into emptiness.

The plot is built upon a series of disappearances. At the beginning Vittoria and Riccardo's romance is over, and Riccardo disappears from the rest of the film. Then, in the first stock market scene the market stops for a minute to honor the death of a colleague. In the second stock market scene many people lose big fortunes in one day. Then Piero's car is stolen. Then Piero disappears for the first time: Vittoria says good-bye to him and starts walking away, but suddenly stops and turns back after a couple of seconds, and she can see that Piero is not there anymore. The end of the story comes with the mere and final disappearance of the characters: neither Piero nor

Vittoria show up for their rendezvous. And in the very last shot the light of the sun goes out.

For Antonioni to represent such characters did not mean that he considered this psychological state as an indifferent, natural state of things. He did not just depict the world of lonely and emotionally alienated people; he wanted to represent the emotional drama of alienation.

> *Eclipse* has been compared to *Marienbad*, but this is false. I think that Resnais in *Marienbad* is satisfied quite well with simply reducing the characters to the status of objects. For me this is a drama. I mean the actual emptiness of the individual. Honesty and beauty tend to disappear.[12]

Antonioni has a deeply critical attitude toward the world he represents, and his main artistic purpose is to show the *dramatic* character of a situation, which fundamentally *lacks* humanistic values. And this lack makes the characters suffer. For Antonioni the lack is the ultimate instance and reason for unhappiness. There is no reason out in the world, no guilt or error in the characters. It is an ultimate existential condition. Therefore the dramatic clash is not between clear values but between the desire for the values and the lack of them. Antonioni creates the *drama of vanishing:* the characters' vanished ability to love is the source of their own suffering. It prevents them from fulfilling their deepest desires. The characters suffer because they still remember what they are lacking, but they cannot help it disappear. "I wish I didn't love you at all or that I loved you much more," Vittoria tells Piero. She is a captive and the victim of her own emotional "disability," and of her contradictory emotions, and this is the main source of the melodrama.

The dynamics of disappearance make "emptiness," "lack," or "nothingness" the ultimate explanatory tool for Vittoria's situation. "Emptiness" is an existential situation that is within her but functions as a disability or as a "disease" of which she is not the cause and against which she cannot fight. She does not suffer because she is bad or guilty. There is no moral or rational reason for her suffering. That is why Vittoria cannot say anything about her emotions. "All you can say is, 'I don't know,'" Piero tells her. Vittoria is simply emptied of her emotions, and this emptiness is without any objective or subjective background. Everybody is like that in the film: Riccardo does not fight too much, and after all, he accepts quite easily their separation. Vittoria's mother is concerned only with her stocks and deplores their separation because now Riccardo cannot help her out financially. Piero is interested only in money, his car, and sex. That is how the *lack* or *empti-*

12. Interview in *L'Express*, 24 May 1962.

ness becomes ultimate powers, incomparably stronger than the power of the characters' desire for love.

Other Genres and Recurrent Plot Elements

Through the analysis of intellectual melodrama I tried to show that genres are not missing entirely from modern cinema, and that modernism is not merely destructive with regard to formal schemes. Other genres or recurrent formal schemes can be found in modern cinema as well. We may consider forms as constitutive of genres if they recur regularly enough and during a long enough time within the late-modern period. I will examine six such elements or forms here as most characteristic of modern genres: investigation, wandering, mental journey, closed-situation drama, reflexive genre parody, and the film essay.

Investigation

Modernist narratives are typically constructed on delaying or entirely suppressing solutions in the plot. What makes crime and mystery attractive for modern narratives is that the solution of crime and mystery plots is delayed almost always by *a mental* or *psychological* act: investigation. Clarifying a situation, exploring an environment is the strongest common ground of crime/mystery films and modernist narrative.

What makes a modern investigation film different from a classical one is the lack of focus on finding the solution to the initial problem. This occurs either because no solution exists, or because other equally or more important problems arise. As a general rule we can say that modern investigation narratives are descriptive rather than problem-solving. In modernist cinema investigation is separated from its result. When following an investigation, the viewer of a modern film is puzzled above all by the mental process and by the different elements surrounding the story rather than by the solution whatever the motive of the investigation may be.

Without the motives of crime or mystery, investigation becomes a simple search, whose motivation can be virtually anything. The most characteristic modern search motive is search for mental content: a memory, a mental state, or for the reason for a mental state (e.g., sadness, anxiety, mental illness).

There are several methods modern investigation films may use to divert the viewer's attention from looking for the solution. One is diverting the focus of attention from the initial problem. This is a characteristic of film noir

narratives, which I will discuss below. A similar shift takes place in Antonioni's *L'avventura.* The majority of the story follows the search for the lost girl. But she is never found. The search loses step by step its original goal, and by the end the two characters pursuing the investigation find that their emotions for the lost girl have vanished as well. There are two story lines in the film, but the one dealing with the mystery of the lost girl is not developed at all. Antonioni develops only the emotional story of the two protagonists. The function of the mysterious events of the girl's disappearance is only to give momentum to the other story line. That is as far as modern investigation film can go in eliminating mystery and crime from the plot. Crossing this line, that is, eliminating crime or mystery entirely, means for Antonioni shifting genres from investigation to melodrama.

In Godard's *Breathless* (made in the same year) one can observe the transition between classical film noir and modern investigation film. Like in a classical film noir, the plot of *Breathless* couples a crime story with a love story, which proves to be destructive for the hero. Yet while the two story lines develop in parallel, they are much more isolated from each other than in a traditional film noir. The most important difference is that the story lines are not motivating each other. Michel does not commit the crime because of Patricia, and Patricia learns after their relationship has begun that Michel is a gangster, even a killer. Michel tries to make a "film noir" out of their story by involving her in his criminal activities (car thefts, escaping the police), but she is supportive of the crime story only for a very short time. Then she changes her mind and calls the police. She is fatal for Michel not because she drives him to crime, like in a traditional film noir, but because she does not love Michel enough to be involved in crime for him. Michel falls because crime and love cannot interact in his story; because his story is *not* a film noir. Each story line is simple and banal without the other, they do not make sense alone: killing the policeman is an entirely purposeless *action gratuite;* and Patricia is a pretty but rather common girl who just cannot make up her mind. What makes sense to the film is that these two stories are put together, and that Godard pretends to give some chance to their merging.

Another solution of modern investigation film is to conceal the goal of the investigation. The best example is Jancsó's *The Round-Up* (1966). We follow a long and complicated investigation, the goal of which is unclear and seems to change at every turn. We do not know where the orders come from and do not understand the logic behind the orders. We assume the different steps fit in a logical order and that the closure of the story is a logical outcome of the investigation, whose ultimate goal is revealed, but in fact this is not the case. The whole complicated procedure of humiliating the cap-

Fig. 8. Crime and love story: Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg in *Breathless* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960). Copyright Raymond Cauchetier, Paris.

tives and turning them one against the other is not necessary for the final result. Logic and rationality are just mystified surfaces in this world of self-contained violence and repression.

Yet another solution in modern investigation films is to widen the scope of the research so that the initial problem to be solved turns out to be but a single aspect of a complex of problems that has no simple solution. An

example of this solution is Bertolucci's first film, *The Grim Reaper.* Even though the police find the murderer, at the end we discover that this particular case is only one of many potential other cases to come and that the fundamental problem is not solved by solving this single case.

Wandering/Travel

Very often search or investigation incites the protagonist to move around in the world. But moving around or traveling may be also an independent narrative motive in modern cinema. In the investigation/search genre, even if the questions are not answered or the mystery is not clarified, still there are specific questions that act as the starting point of the narrative. In the *travel* or *picaresque* form the exploration of the environment is not started by a well-defined question that the protagonist must answer. It starts out of a situation that makes the protagonist travel or wander around.

If the investigation film goes back to film noir, this type inherits its narrative form from neorealism. The hero(s) in this genre travels around in the world most often with no specific goal. In most cases the motive for wandering is not to arrive somewhere or to find something but to leave a place or to escape. The primary narrative purpose of this genre is not to get the protagonist somewhere, but to explore the protagonist's world with the help of a constantly changing environment.

In his early films Truffaut was particularly keen on this form: the protagonist in *The 400 Blows* (1959) is always on the move and the film ends with Antoine's escape. Godard makes two exemplary works in this genre: *Pierrot le fou,* where Ferdinand escapes his petty bourgeois family, and *Week-end*, where a couple who start out wanting to commit a murder end up fleeing the nightmare of a weekend. Tarkovsky's masterpiece, *Andrei Rublev,* in its own way also belongs to this genre even if the actual physical moving from place to place is not represented in the film. However, in later Tarkovsky films the presence of the travel theme is more explicit. Altogether four of his seven films—*Andrei Rublev*, *Solaris* (1972), *Stalker* (1979) and *Nostalghia* (1983)—are made in the wandering or travel genre.

The travel genre became very popular especially during the second period of modernism, and this was the genre that had the most influence on the renewal of American cinema at the turn of the 1960s-1970s. The American version of the travel genre is known as the *road movie*, staging stories based on traveling by car or motorcycle across vast distances, living a life of freedom and independence. During the last phase of European modernism the travel genre was already almost entirely under the influence of the American road

movies, like in Wim Wenders's *Alice in the Cities* (1974), *False Movement* (1975), and *Kings of the Road* (1976) or in Antonioni's *Profession: Reporter* (1975).

The Mental Journey

Travel means first of all physical dislocation, but in modernism a special variant of this genre was developed in which travel takes place not in the physical world but in a person's mind. The literary equivalent of this genre is modern literature's well-known "stream of consciousness" narrative form initiated by Marcel Proust and radicalized by James Joyce. The basic technique of this narrative form is the extension of short periods of time to vast layers of past or imaginary time. Images of memory or imagination were widely used in all periods of film history. And the narrative form known as "embedded narratives," which consists of staging a character's narrative, is another very old narrative device. The modernist time-travel form differs from traditional forms of representing past memories and imagination in that the different time layers usually overlap and are difficult to distinguish from one another, which means that the connections within the narrative between the layers is blurred. Themes and motives rather than rational time-space relations link them together. In the mental journey genre, flashbacks and pictures of imagination are not tools to help viewers better understand a narrative. If the goal of the travel genre is to explore the physical and social environment of one or several characters, the purpose of a mental journey film is to explore the "mental environment" of one or several characters.

An early version of the mental journey form can be found in Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957). One-third of the film's playing time consists of scenes of memories and dreamlike fantasy that do not constitute a coherent narrative frame. Although it is never unclear in which mental frame a given scene takes place, and reality, memory, and dream are well distinguished on the narrative level, yet the time frame of the imaginary scenes are made uncertain by the simple fact that the protagonist appears as an old man in these scenes supposedly taking place some fifty years earlier. He is not only a passive observer: other characters talk to him as if to a young man of their times. What we see here is a contemporary mental representation of the past, a sort of dialogue with the past or an interpretation of the past. The past is evoked not the way it was but the way it is viewed from the perspective of the present. This is symbolized by one of the dream scenes where the main character's young love from fifty years earlier holds a mirror in front of his face and the reflection is that of an old man. This is how the

protagonist's car trip to Lundt becomes simultaneously a mental trip into his unconscious where anxiety, bad conscience, and painful and cherished memories of his youth produce images in a way to disclose the deepest roots of the problems he must face in the present.

Not much later, in 1959 Alain Resnais gave a great momentum to the theme of mental journey with his *Hiroshima, My Love* where memory and fantasy were not just auxiliary elements to a linear plot, but became the central motives of the narrative. In his later films, *Last Year at Marienbad* and *Muriel*, Resnais radicalized this procedure by merging the narrative process with memories and fantasy. In the meantime *Marienbad* collaborator Alain Robbe-Grillet started making his own films with the same narrative method. Thus, from the early 1960s on, the theme of the mental journey became a genre. Imaginary sequences or mental images occur frequently in modern films, but imagination or remembering is rarely chosen as central themes even in the modernist period. The main representatives of this genre are, not surprisingly, the *nouveau roman* directors: Resnais, Robbe-Grillet, Marguerite Duras, and as an exception, Tarkovsky. The idea that "writing" is the central element of a novel is directly represented in their films by the fact that in each of these films the central topic is someone's telling a narrative that is, most of the time, incoherent both logically and chronologically.

Fig. 9. Journey to the past: Victor Sjöström in *Wild Strawberries* (Ingmar Bergman, 1957).

Fig. 10. Journey to a phantasy world: *The Saragossa Manuscript* (Woijczech Has, 1964).

The narrative about past or imaginary events is represented through the meanderings of memories, imagination, or lies. And so the film's narrative becomes directly identified with that process.

As the mental journey form is in fact a special case of the picaresque genre, in which the travel takes place in a mental universe, it seems quite natural that the two forms are sometimes difficult to distinguish. In his most peculiar film, *The Saragossa Manuscript* (1964), Wojciech Has makes it quite difficult to decipher which parts of the incredible and fairy-tale-like adventures of his hero are the product of his delirious state of mind and which parts take place in his picaresque adventures.

Last Year at Marienbad: *The Ambiguity of Narration*

The early Resnais films show that in fact the mental journey genre has very similar principles to those of the Freudian psychoanalytic technique. All three films focus on the psychological impact that evoking past traumatic events have on the present. In all of these stories a past trauma has to be uncovered, remembered, and lived through again in order to get rid of it. But *Hiroshima, My Love* is the only one among the three where the function of past memory is clear in the story. The film starts with questioning the woman's experiences about what happened in Hiroshima, since she was not there at the time of the tragedy. She only saw the events on film or the traces of them later on. By contrast, there is no doubt about what happened in Nevers, of which she had a real-life experience.

Last Year at Marienbad and *Muriel* are special cases because the factual status of the past event is made uncertain in them and is subject to mental manipulation by the characters. Although *Muriel* looks more complicated and complex both structurally and visually, *Marienbad* is more radical in approaching the limits of the genre. Both films' narratives are based on

hiding and blurring the characters' identity and past. In *Muriel* there are three characters who have known each other in the past and have uncomfortable memories about it. The characters evoke different elements of the past, and these elements are questioned or refuted by others. In *Muriel* it is clear from the beginning that the characters will lie about their past and present, but the fact that there existed a common past about which they have different stories remains unquestioned throughout the film.

It is here that *Last Year at Marienbad* is more radical, since the mere existence of the common past is rendered uncertain in the story. Here, even the "past" and the "trauma" are created by the mere textual process of the narrative, which causes uncertainty to reign over each and every element of the narrative. Past and present are not only indiscernible, but their reality remains a mystery throughout the film. One cannot speak of a *relationship* between past and present, because the two exist in the same time span. The film's narrative process resembles hypnosis or persuasion[13] rather than psychoanalysis. It was Resnais's and Robbe-Grillet's intention to create a narrative behind which no straight and unambiguous storyboard can be constructed.[14] They succeeded in doing so with regard to the continuity between past and present: no one can reconstruct the "real" chronology of the events in the film any more than the degree of reality of many scenes (whether real or imaginary). The "past" event that is supposed to have an impact on the present is probably an invention of the protagonist, named X, a product of "the imagination that pretends to be memory."[15] However, as a narrative, the past event can influence the present as though it were in fact real memory: the woman finally leaves the castle with him. This is the only chronologically coherent fact in the story: it is predicted by the character, named M, in the future tense; we see it happening, and X narrates it in past tense. For the woman to leave, it is necessary that X convince her that to leave with him has been a promise made by her in the past, as if remembering was the only thing that could give sense to her desire to leave. Without a past, desires of the present, hence acts of the future, have no legitimacy.

13. "If we accept Truffaut's idea: 'It should be possible to summarize every film in one word,' I want this to be told: '*L'Année dernière à Marienbad* or persuasion.'" André S. Labarthe and Jacques Rivette, "Entretien avec Alain Resnais et Alain Robbe-Grillet," *Cahiers du cinéma* 123 (September 1961): 4.

14. Resnais repeats the *nouveau roman* idea about the omnipotence of the narrative process: "There is no reality outside of the film, the only time is the time of the film . . . The objects do not exist outside of the narrative created by the novel." Cited in Robert Benayoun, *Alain Resnais: Arpenteur de l'imaginaire* (Paris: Stock/Cinema, 1980), 105.

15. Marion Denis, *Le Soir,* 22 December 1961.

But this means that the past is only an accessory; it is not an autonomous dimension, it is a construction of wishes and desires. The past is dependent on present desires, in other words, it takes place in the present, and memories are not only evoked but also created in the present by a narrative that makes some fictitious events appear as taking place in the past. The only role past plays in this game is to give memories a name, to provide a story that can be continued in the present and in the future. Past is represented in this film as pure invention or convention, as M explains, relating to the eighteenth-century sculptures representing Charles III in antique robes.

The merit of *Last Year at Marienbad* is that it not only blurs the boundaries between past and present, between reality and fantasy, but simply cancels out time, and contracts everything into one single narrative surface. "Time has no importance," says X at one point. In fact, the only thing that exists in the dimension of time in the story is the narration itself. All through the film the *past tense* of X's narrative refers to some past; a real or imaginary "last year" or "the first encounter," and *present tense* refers to the supposed present time of the narration, "this year" or "the second encounter." But after the scene where M shoots his wife, the tenses of X's narrative suddenly change. When he says offscreen, "No, don't say that *it was by force!*" he clearly refers to the time that so far has been the time of the narration. From this point on, past tense refers not to "last year" but to the supposed present of the narrative. X does not recount in past tense any longer what happened last year, but what happens right now, in the present or in the future: the woman fleeing with him. The narrative act takes a step forward in time, it leaves the story behind as if there were yet another present tense in which narration continues. The events cannot catch up with the narrative act, because everything that happens becomes a past relative to the narration, which is to say that, strictly speaking, only narration has a story developing in time. Only narration has an arrangement in time, not the story it recounts. What happens does not happen *in* the story, it happens in the narrative act. This can be well seen where M shoots his wife. After that scene X says, "No, this is not a good ending. I want you alive." Then we see the woman alive again, and now she is ready to leave with X. It is the narrator who makes her be killed, and then changes his mind and makes up another ending he prefers to the first one.

That is why there is no puzzle in *Last Year at Marienbad.* Traveling in time is not real in the film. In a way Resnais cheats the viewer by making her believe that it is important to try to distinguish between past and present and to arrange the logical chain of events. But in reality, rational problem solving does not help one understand the film, because what is narrated in

Fig. 11. "Time has no importance": Delphine Seyrig and Sacha Pitoëff in *Last Year at Marienbad* (Alain Resnais, 1961).

one way or another is not what happened prior to the narration. That makes M stand for an alert to the viewer. M plays a game in the film, the rules of which only he knows, so he wins at every occasion and against everybody including X. But he knows that he cannot win against X in the big game: the struggle for the woman. X does not fight with logical weapons: he talks and persuades. Narration and problem solving serve as opposites in the film, and if there is a clear statement in the film, it is that narration is not certain knowledge about facts or about "rules of a game," but rather nothing more than emotional persuasion. The film is about the irrational effects of storytelling. Only narration has the power of time, that is, the power to set in motion things immobilized by the logic of conventions and stereotypes.

These films nevertheless set the rules for a genre. Typically, in a modern mental journey film the different associations are ambiguously anchored in one character. Often the viewer does not know whose imagination or memory is being represented. In Tarkovsky's *Childhood of Ivan* (1962) the narrative is from time to time interrupted by scenes that can be interpreted throughout the film as Ivan's dreams or memories. But the very last scene does not fit into this pattern since we know that Ivan is already dead. The fantasy layer of the film is now disconnected from its subjective anchor; the fictitious mediator of the imaginary sequences is eliminated, and the film text itself is meant to become a vehicle for mental associations. In other cases the imagining subject is unambiguous, but the level of reality of the events are not. In a short film by Robert Enrico, *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1962), we follow a man who falls into a deep creek from a bridge just seconds before his execution. For the whole twenty minutes the viewer is certain to follow his way to liberty. It is only at the end that it becomes clear that what we saw was his last-minute inner visionary journey extended to half an hour, back to his childhood.

Alain Robbe-Grillet's early films are the most radical cases of narrative ambiguity. In the first film he directed, *The Immortal* (1963), the contradictions of the story can only be explained if we suppose that all that we see is the imagination of the protagonist, as told by the female character: "All this is your imagination." Robbe-Grillet himself seconds this: "In fact, much more than in *Marienbad*, in *The Immortal* everything takes place in the character's mind. Therefore, he is, in a way, superfluous to the image."[16] But in this case the film has no narrative situation whatsoever, since the main character is not the narrator of the story, like in *Marienbad*, and at the end of the story he dies. The last image of the film is the picture of the laughing woman who is supposed to be dead already. As a matter of fact, Robbe-Grillet had a determined narrative situation in mind when writing the script: "In *L'immortelle*, in particular, the discourse originates from the character in the room who is thinking."[17] If this is the case, one thing is sure: this situation is not distinguished in any way in the film other than by reappearing several times.[18] Furthermore, we do not know anything about this situation, much less, for that matter, than about the imaginary scenes, not the least whether or not it is itself imaginary. *The Immortal* is driven to the limits of narrative coherence, and apparently that is why Roland Barthes reprimanded its auteur: he believed that the film is beyond ambiguity; it is simply confusing.[19]

In *Trans-Europ-Express* (1966) there is ambiguity as well around the degree of reality of some of the scenes. We follow the construction of a storyboard told by a film director (played by Robbe-Grillet himself) traveling on a train, and see the scenes of the film he is making up. However, certain elements that take place in the imaginary sequences, namely, details of the sex life of the protagonist, are somehow not taken into consideration by the director;

16. Anthony N. Fragola and Roch C. Smith, *The Erotic Dream Machine: Interviews with Alain Robbe-Grillet on His Films* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 27.

17. Fragola and Smith, *Erotic Dream Machine*, 29.

18. Robbe-Grillet claims that originally he wanted the room scenes to be distinguished by lighting, which did not happen because the cameraman did not dare to light the room darkly: "The room must be dark, and the outside world should be very bright because what unfolds in his imagination lies beyond the confines of his room. Later, when I objected to this image to the cinematographer, he calmly responded that he was afraid that people would have thought that I did not know how to light the room." Fragola and Smith, *Erotic Dream Machine*, 29.

19. "In fact Robbe-Grillet does not kill the meaning at all, he just makes it confusing, he thinks that to kill the meaning it is enough to make it confusing." Delahaye and Rivette, "Entretien avec Roland Barthes," *Cahiers du cinéma* 147 (September 1963): 30.

they have no function whatsoever in the general plot yet they happen right before our eyes. While the auteur seems to be busy with the logical construction of the plot, the main character is only interested in satisfying his violent sexual instincts. He starts having an autonomous life to the point that, at the end, he leaves the train with one of the imaginary characters of the story, who is supposed to be already dead according to the scenario. His next film, *The Man Who Lies* (1968), is even more ambiguous. Neither the identity of the main character (who pretends to be someone else in the story and who at some point in the film claims to be just an actor rehearsing a role), nor the coherence of the events in the story is certain. The same events are repeated in different and contradictory ways; the chronology of the events is blurred, and the fact that the main character wears the same suit in the contemporary scenes and in the scenes set twenty years before, suggests that what we see is not a *story* but a *narrative* of someone of whom we know nothing certain. He comes into being exclusively through his own narrative; and if this narrative is contradictory, so is his existence. This film, which holds the *nouveau roman* banner higher than any film before it—"story is nothing, narration is everything"—clearly points toward the total destruction of principles of traditional storytelling, coherence of time and space, identity of the characters, and applies the principles of serialism inherited from contemporary music.

It is in fact in Robbe-Grillet's next film, *Eden and After* (1971), where composition according to musical series entirely replaces linear topochronological structure, and consequently, as Robbe-Grillet put it, this film becomes "as hostile as possible to the idea of a narrative."[20] Whereas earlier Robbe-Grillet films, including *Last Year at Marienbad,* fit into the mental journey genre since narration is anchored in them in one specific character (even if in a self-contradictory way), this film crosses the border of traditional or modern genres as these are based on linear topochronological logic. There is no distinguished narrative point of view in *Eden and After,* which made it the first full-length feature film in the mainstream commercial circuit that is fully constructed upon a serial system known at that time only among the avant-garde cinema.[21]

20. See François Jost, "La genèse d'un film," video interview by Cellule d'animation culturelle du ministère des relations extérieures et U.A.V. de l'École Normale Supérieure de Saint-Cloud, 1982.

21. Robbe-Grillet's experimental intentions were clear in this case. He made two films at the same time using the same footage. The other film was called *N Took the Dice* and was made for television release. Robbe-Grillet wanted to apply the two main constructing

Fig. 12. The imaginary hero: Jean-Louis Trintignant in *Trans-Europ-Express* (Alain Robbe-Grillet, 1966).

All modern mental journey genre films are self-reflexive to some extent, because the ultimate narrative anchor is the film itself as a narrative medium. In Resnais's films and in *The Immortal* the filmmaking situation is implicit, and the act of narration is the basis of reflexivity. In other films, such as *Trans-Europ-Express* and Fellini's *8 1/2*, the filmmaking situation is explicit. The most complex case of reflexivity of the mental journey genre in the modern period is Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1974). It can be considered as a summary of different techniques introduced by former mental journey films, and I will return to this below.

Closed-Situation Drama

Investigation/travel genres are forms of extensive description. The mental journey is intensive in space but extensive in time: the characters remain in the same, often very restrictive, space segment while mentally they fly over different layers of past, present, and eventually future. There is a dramatic form in modern cinema that is intensive in time as well as in space: this

principles of contemporary music in each of the versions respectively: serial construction in *Eden and After* and aleatoric construction in the other one.

Fig. 13. Robbe-Grillet in his own film as he is making up the story of *Trans-Europ-Express.*

will be called the *closed-situation drama.* Here, the characters are closed in a limited space segment (a room, a boat, a train, a house) and live through a dramatic situation without stepping outside of it. The spreading of this form in modern cinema is fundamentally due to the theatrical influence in the late 1940s and 1950s, and more specifically to the influence of existentialist drama. Because it is based upon a classical theatrical principle (unity of space and time) the form itself can be found very often in silent cinema too, but the use of this form is characteristically different in modern films. This form may be used simply to provide a starting point for telling different stories, for example, through the narration of the characters. In this case the closed situation is only a narrative framework of traditional storytelling. In one of Bergman's early films, *Secrets of Women* (1952), four women are awaiting their husbands in a country house. But this situation provides only a frame for the different stories they tell about their marriages. The film's story is not constructed by their interactions and reactions to their actual situation. It consists rather of a series of narratives put side by side and compared to each other very much in a way like the narrative of *Rashomon* from the same period. But we can find such constructions much later, too, for example in Pierre Kast's *Le bel âge* (1959), where a hunting scene provides the frame for different narratives recounted by the characters.

The specificity of modern closed-situation drama by contrast is to build up a narrative originated by the situation of isolation itself. The characters do not necessarily reflect on the fact of isolation, but their reactions to each other are a result of that situation and could not be provoked otherwise. The use of closed-situation dramas started in the 1950s, not in Europe but in America by two figures who are both closely associated with modern cinema. One of them was Hitchcock, who in his *Rope* (1948) created the first "experimental" case of this genre; the other was Sidney Lumet, whose *12 Angry*

Men (1957) is the first perfect example of a story in which the isolated situation itself becomes an important factor regarding the characters' behavior. It was however modern cinema that explored all the possibilities of this dramatic form. We can consider it therefore a genuine modernist form, which flourished during the modern period and by which films may belong to the modernist movement even if no other stylistic or narrative modernism and no philosophical topics fashionable in modern art can be found in them.

Closed-situation dramas are all model cases of situations concerning existential limits, like in psychological experiencing, where human actions and reactions are provoked in such a way that they are not related to real-life situations or stories. Because it is the closed situation that provides the dramatic starting point, it must be unambiguous; therefore no mental journey film can be a closed-situation drama at the same time even if the situation itself appears to be unrealistic.

Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel* (1962) is the most powerful example of this genre in the early period of late modern cinema. The only thing that brings the characters together is precisely the unlikely fact that they simply cannot leave a certain room. The pure and abstract fact of sequestration with no intelligible reason is the topic of the film. The characters are forced to be together, to cooperate and to communicate with each other against their will, and for no discernable reason. They are trapped in a situation that is new for them all and for which they cannot find an explanation, so they cannot find a way out. This film does not even try to find a plausible pretext for creating the closed situation like all other films of this kind. The most usual situation in this type of film is a random encounter of people in a closed space (such as a train, a prison, a hotel) from where they cannot leave before solving a problem together. The drama springs from the fact of being constrained to cooperate, and the conflict is usually caused by the inappropriateness of human contacts that slows down or endangers the solution of the situation. Although stylistically Buñuel's film is rather classical, the absurdity of the situation and the surrealism in some scenes make it part of the modernist movement. Moreover, it became the model of other absurd surrealist closed-situation dramas, for example Jan Nemec's *A Report on the Party and the Guests* (1966).

Other important closed-situation dramas include Jerzy Kawalerowicz's *The Night Train* (1959), Roman Polanski's *Knife in the Water* (1962); Miklós Jancsó's *The Round-Up* (1965), András Kovács's *Cold Days* (1966); Ingmar Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961), *Persona* (1966), and *Rite* (1969); Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Beware of a Holy Whore* (1971) and *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972); and Marco Ferreri's *Liza* (1972) and *La grande bouffe* (1973).

Fig. 14. A closed-situation drama: *The Exterminating Angel* (Luis Buñuel, 1962).

Satire/Genre Parody

Satire and genre parody are reflexive forms by nature. Satire involves an exaggerated approach to a subject matter where the exaggeration results not in sublime or emotional effects but in degradation by ridiculousness. The double reflection caused by exaggeration and ridiculousness ensures

satire's reflexive character. The genre parody is a form of satire where the subject matter that suffers ridiculous exaggeration is a set of conventions of a genre. In modern cinema mainly popular genres are held up to ridicule in genre parodies. Reflexivity is obviously very direct in the case of genre parody.

Parodying filmmaking as an activity was a favorite subject even in the very early days of film. But we do not have too many cases of film genre parodies before the late modern era. Genres became a focus for parodies only from the late 1950s on, and making parodies became a real trend in the second half of the 1960s. This phenomenon is certainly due to the sharp opposition between art cinema and entertainment cinema taking shape during the late modern era, as well as modernism's attempt to question the validity or the unambiguous character of narration. Genre parody is one of the modern forms that was very popular in non-European cinema in this period as well. A remarkable Japanese genre parody was made by Kurosawa in *Sanjuro* (1962). This film parodies the conventions of samurai films, the kind that Kurosawa himself had also made. His leading actor, Toshiro Mifune, acts in a quite exaggerated way, and the film makes fun of all conventional gestures, situations, and plot shifts of the genre. It is also remarkable that the film has very few fight scenes and especially that the two main enemies do not meet until the end of the film, when their personal duel takes only a few seconds. They face each other for a long time immobile, after which Sanjuro kills his enemy with a single slash of the sword. This short finale in fact corresponds to the Western tradition, where the finale duel consists mostly of one or two final gunshots. Kurosawa's genre parody made a considerable step toward merging two popular traditions: the western and the samurai film.

The earliest modern genre parodies include Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player,* made in 1959, a satirical application of film noir elements. Godard also made a genre parody, *Alphaville* (1965). He used the character of Lemmy Caution, played by Eddie Constantine, who was very popular in the early 1950s for his light and playful gangster movies, themselves predecessors in many ways of the James Bond series. *Alphaville* was conceived as another Lemmy Caution movie without the usual gags and adventures and with Lemmy Caution ten years older, serious, and philosophical.[22] *Alphaville* is definitely not a funny film, but still a parody of the hypertechnologized world of the modern gangster and science fiction films. Jacques Demy's *The*

22. Godard used the character of Lemmy Caution played by Eddie Constantine one more time in his film *Allemagne neuf-zero* (1990).

Umbrellas of Cherbourg (1964) can also be considered a parody of the fashionable American musicals of the time.

Genre parodies and satires began to boom in modern cinema after 1964. The geographical distribution of European production of satires is however very uneven. Apparently, it became more popular in national film cultures where the literary tradition of satire was already strong, which made France, Czechoslovakia, and England the leading producers of satires and parodies. This genre was eliminated from Czechoslovakian film production following the Soviet military invasion of the country in 1968 but reappeared in a very similar style in Hungarian cinema in the first half of the 1970s.

Genre parodies aimed essentially at popular genres like historical adventure films such as westerns, like in Oldřich Lipský's *Limonade Joe* (1964), historical costume adventure films like Richardson's *Tom Jones* (1963), or samurai films such as the Kurosawa film mentioned above; gangster movies such as Varda's *The Creatures* (1966), and thrillers like Elio Petri's *The Tenth Victim* (1965). Satires were mainly directed at political regimes like in Milos Forman's *The Firemen's Ball* (1967), Makavejev's *W.R.— Mysteries of the Organism* (1971), Lindsay Anderson's *O Lucky Man!* (1973), or cultural customs and ways of life such as Louis Malle's *Zazie in the Subway* (1960), and its Hungarian counterpart, János Rózsa and Ferenc Kardos's *Children's Sicknesses* (1965); Soviet director Elem Klimov's *Welcome* (1964); *An Unusual Exhibition* by Georgian Eldar Shengelaya (1968); British director Tony Richardson's film made in the United States, *The Loved One* (1965), Yugoslavian director Makavejev's film made in Canada, *Sweet Movie* (1974), Milos Forman's first two films, *Black Peter* (1963) and *The Loves of a Blonde* (1965), as well as his first American feature, *Taking Off* (1971).

The Film Essay

This genre is also a typically modernist invention. As uncertain as this category may seem, it has an unquestioned validity in this period of art cinema. The idea that filmmaking should be like essay writing was born in the late 1940s by Astruc. It proposed a film structure where images are linked together by abstract logic of thought rather than by conventions of topochronological storytelling. The film essay had a different ideal of nonnarrative cinema than the avant-garde. Astruc did not mean to join the abstract cinema movement or the surrealist avant-garde. He wanted cinema to reach the intellectual level of philosophical essay writing. And since in the modern period we find quite a few cases where the filmmaker's aim was undoubtedly

to contribute with his film to a particular philosophical, political, or ideological debate by making the focus of his film the abstract (mainly verbal) arguments of that specific debate, we can legitimately speak of film essays. The film essay is not an avant-garde film, but it is the most personal genre in the commercial art-film practice.

These films may or may not have a coherent storyboard, but whether or not they do, their main goal is to put forward a line of arguments where an eventual story only illustrates one or more theses. Rather than the chronology, it is the conceptual logic of the arguments that rules the construction of the film. Different scenes and events in the film are providing an opportunity for the characters to make their points rather than specific actions. The film essay is a pure late-modern creation; we find no antecedent of it in the early modern period. It is closely related with the auteur idea of making a film on the model of writing a personal essay. Because the film essay was mainly used as a political act by those who made them, which made the film essay a characteristic genre of the political phase of modern film, it is also rare to find film essays in the first period of late modernism.

Ever since Astruc raised the idea of essay writing with the camera, the *Cahiers* critics of the fifties were eager to discover something that reminded them of this kind of filmmaking. Jacques Rivette, for example, saw already in Rossellini's *Journey to Italy* (1954) the first realization of the film essay: "[N]ow there is *Journey to Italy,* which with perfect clarity offers to cinema . . . the possibility of the essay."[23] We are not very far from the truth, though if we agree with those who associate this genre with Godard. Godard's most stable and far-reaching influence in modern cinema can be related to his films like *My Life to Live* (1962), *A Married Woman* (1964), *Masculine-Feminine* (1966), and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1966). These are his fundamental essays, in which he used cinéma vérité (self-reflective documentary style) to place his characters in situations where they could make their comments on topics like society, politics, love, sex, and art. Especially in *Masculine-Feminine* and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her,* the film's narrative consisted of only loosely connected situations where characters spoke monologues or lengthy, occasionally improvised, dialogues. It is important to emphasize that these were not real cinéma vérité films. All of them used professional actors who most of the time recited text improvised by Godard himself on location. However, Godard gave to these films a style of a self-reflective documentary, which became an extremely popular form. Especially

23. *Cahiers du cinéma* 46 (April 1955).

My Life to Live had a considerable influence on Alexander Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966), and on Alain Tanner's *The Salamander* (1971). The most important followers of the Godardian cinéma vérité-style film essay include Bernardo Bertolucci, Vilgot Sjöman, Alain Tanner, and Alexander Kluge.

Jean-Marie Straub with his *Not Reconciled* (1965), a dramatized meditation about the possibility of reconciliation between people having opposing experiences and memories about the war in postwar Germany, has made a rather original contribution to the film-essay genre. One of the particularities of the film taken from the Godardian style but brought to an extreme was the discrepancy between the philosophical and poetic style as articulated by the characters and the banality of the situations they were speaking about. Straub replaced the cinéma verité style with Bressonian minimalism.

Film essays were most popular among directors in some communist countries, for this gave them an opportunity to publicize political ideas that could not be expressed otherwise. In Hungary, András Kovács and Péter Bacsó made films in this genre in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and in Cuba Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, with his renowned *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968) represents this genre. This film shows all the important characteristics of the genre. After the revolution, when many people left the country, a man decides to stay in Cuba while all his family, including his wife, leaves. He remains alone, and wanders around in Havana aimlessly while in the verbal narration we constantly hear his thoughts about his life, about Cuba, the revolution, the bourgeoisie, sex, war, capitalism. The film abounds in documentary footage, citations of television newscasts scattered among the images about what he is doing. The film is not constructed along a story line even though it includes a side story about a girl who he met on the street, had sex with, and whose family later on tries to coerce him into marrying her. The film finishes not according to dramaturgical rules, but at a point where the director thinks that the concept of *underdevelopment* as he understands it (mainly in relation to American imperialism and cultural backwardness) is clearly explained.

Even though the film essay is constructed by an abstract logic of a line of thought it is not part of the mental journey genre. The goal of the film essay is to build up a system of arguments, not to explore a mental universe. Most of Godard's second-period films starting from 1967 can be listed under this category, but he abandoned cinéma vérité style as his political message became more radical and focused. Starting with films like *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1966), *La Chinoise* (1967), continuing with *The Joy of Knowledge* (1968), virtually all of his films were codirected with Jean-Pierre Gorin (1969-1972, the Dziga Vertov group), and *Number Two*, *Here and*

Elsewhere (1975) and *How Is It Going?* (1978), made together with Anne-Marie Miéville. Fellini also made a film essay in 1978, *Orchestra Rehearsal*, in which he expresses his ideas about Italian democracy of the 1970s. The film essay disappeared quite quickly starting from the late 1970s, and virtually the only European director continuing this tradition has been Nanni Moretti, who started his career in the mid-1980s.

:6:
Patterns of Modern Forms

Now that we have explored the main principles of narration and genres of modern cinema we can address a more subtle categorization of the form.

Referring to Resnais's *Hiroshima*, Eric Rohmer provided a particularly concise and general formula about how he understood modernism in the cinema:

> There has not been a profoundly modern cinema yet that has attempted what the cubists did in painting or the Americans in novel writing. That is, reconstructing reality from fragments, and this reconstruction may appear arbitrary or profane.[1]

Rohmer's formula is a particularly accurate summary of all the important basic principles of the form of modern film.

1. Modernist art has a *fragmented* view of reality.
2. The modern artist uses *general and abstract* principles of composition to reconstruct the coherence of reality.
3. The foundation of this reconstruction is always in its composition an abstract idea. The immediate result of this reconstruction without fail includes an amount of arbitrariness or *subjectivity* in it, because the form of the work of art refers first to an abstract concept rather than to the reality immediately given to the senses. Therefore, the modern form is always deprived of a certain depth that comes from a common sense of

1. Eric Rohmer, in Jean Domarchi, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Jean-Luc Godard, Pierre Kast, Jacques Rivette, and Eric Rohmer, "Hiroshima, notre amour," *Cahiers du cinéma* 97 (July 1959): 4.

earthly or sacred reality taken seriously and considered as the foundation of all art. In other words, the idea of reality that modern art reflects is always filtered through an abstract concept which it tends to consider more real than empirical reality.

4. The ultimate source of the form of modern art is its own abstract principles rather than empirical reality, which is why to some extent the modern form is always *profane* and *self-reflective*.

Modern art forms always contain an abstract conception that is meant to mediate between the form and reality. For modernism indeed *has* a sense of reality, which is a fundamental difference between modern and postmodern. The main tendency in modern cinema's approach to reality is to represent it by *surface images* that do not refer to an underlying continuous process of development, which is commonly manifested in classical narrative. If the teleological nature of narrative does not provide the sequence of images with a beginning and an end, the surface image of reality always tends to be fragmented and static. The term "static" here means not the lack of motion but the fact that motion has no direction or that it is self-contained or circular. And fragmentation means not a lack of continuity but the fact that the continuous flow of images is not the manifestation of a teleological process. The modern film image is understood more as a standalone (continuous or noncontinuous) fragment than as an organic element of a synthesizing organic process.[2]

We can say therefore that modernist forms tend to evoke fragmentation rather than continuity of a process; they are analytical rather than synthetic, abstract rather than empirical, subjective rather than objective, self-reflective rather than immediate, and conceptual rather than emotional. These are the most general tendencies that are materialized in very different manners in different modern trends, and these differences are the basis of the different modern forms and styles. There is also a difference regarding the radicalism by which these tendencies are represented in art cinema in the modern era, and so there are a lot of films that we find around the demarcation line between classical and modern art cinema.

Late modernism in the cinema was an international art-cinema movement, and wherever it was influential it was adapted to some local cultural tradition. The power of modernism was to integrate so many cultural influ-

2. These two general aspects of the modern film form are closely related in Deleuze's theory of modern cinema. For the relationship between the "pure image of time" and the "crystylline system of images," see Deleuze, *The Time Image*.

ences coming not only from national cinemas but also from other forms of national high art or folklore. The diversity of styles in modern cinema is due to the diversity of artistic and cultural references modern films use to construct their forms. The reason why we cannot speak of one single "modernist film style" is just this diversity born from the encounter between the main principles of modern art and the different cultural backgrounds in the cinema. Forms of modernism crisscross the borders of national cinemas. But the forms that become current in a culture in a given period of modernism are very much dependent on the cultural sensibility of a given national cinema. It exceeds the scope of this study as well as my competence to give a thorough explanation of the preferences of specific national cultures regarding modern styles and genres. In later chapters, however, I will try to give an outline of a "geographical" or cultural distribution of the basic forms of modern cinema and leave it to future and more detailed research to answer the question of what in a given cultural background was receptive to one kind of modernism rather than to another.

To describe the main tendencies of modern cinema I will use some general traits related to modernist principles of formal composition. The first distinction will be made between styles based on radically continuous constructions and those based on radically fragmented ones.

Primary Formation: Continuity and Discontinuity

Whether a film gives a general impression of a continuous process through time-space continuity or rather looks like a discontinuous process of fragmented scenes and images is determined by the fundamental aesthetic texture of a film, and consequently it is part of the most basic choices of a filmmaker. In some periods of film history, this dimension of the film form leaves very little choice to the filmmakers; in other periods a wide variety of ways become "permitted" in both directions. Roughly speaking, the very early period of film history,[3] the 1920s and the 1960s, were periods where one could find both highly fragmented and continuous compositions.

Rohmer uses cubism to illustrate what he meant by modernism, which succinctly illustrates the fact that modern forms reconstruct reality from

3. As far as early cinema is concerned, I rely on Tom Gunning's article in which he distinguishes four genres of early cinema according to the ways the films handle time-space and narrative continuity. Gunning distinguishes between forms of "continuity," "non-continuity," and "discontinuity." Tom Gunning, "Continuity, Non-continuity, Discontinuity: A Theory of Genres in Early Films," in *Early Cinema*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (London: BFI Publishing, 1990), 86–94.

fragments. However, obviously not all of modernism is like cubism. Does this invalidate Rohmer's heuristic conception? I do not think it does; we just have to interpret correctly the concept of *fragmentation*. Cubism was the style of modern art where fragmentation was the most apparent on the surface, but that does not mean that a fragmented vision of reality cannot be interpreted with regard to other modern styles too, albeit in a different manner. The question is not so much the apparent visual and acoustic fragmentation of the form as the underlying connection or disconnection between the surface of the form and the traditional codes of formal cohesion that dominated European art over the several centuries preceding the appearance of modern art at the end of the nineteenth century. The tonal system in music; the motivation of the plot according to individual psychology in novel writing; and visual verisimilitude composed according to Renaissance perspective in painting are, roughly speaking, the traditional codes that make the surface structure of the form refer to some kind of earthly or transcendental "reality" thereby creating an organic whole of form and content. We speak of modernism in Western art after the nineteenth century to refer to a representation that is not built upon these traditional representation systems evoking an organic vision. When a painting does not represent a scene according to renaissance perspective, when a piece of music is not composed according to the tonal system, when a narrative plot is not motivated by psychological realism, one usually has the impression that these works do not represent the "real world," only a partial vision of it, therefore their forms are abstract. In fact these works use conceptual systems in a similar way as traditional art to create a formal coherence, only these conceptual systems are based on unusual principles, "conceptual inventions" about reality.[4] And when one of these ideas still seems to relate to an important aspect of a traditionally conceived approach to reality, a modernist style or trend crystallizes around it, which may remain ephemeral or become more successful and last for decades.

The deepest sense of modernism's fragmented character is the surface structure's disconnectedness from "reality" as conveyed by a traditional

4. I leave aside the discussion of critical categories such as "beauty," "harmony," and "balance," the lack of which were usually identified with modern art in the common critical practice during most of the twentieth century. I take it for granted that these critical categories are historically and socially based on common aesthetic perception and have a very limited distinctive value in stylistic comparisons. However, in the course of modern art there is a constant tendency of opposing, from time to time, commonly accepted forms representing these critical terms. When this opposition becomes part of the artistic canon after a while, the general perception of "beauty" and "harmony" shifts again.

logic that is meant to connect empirical surface with an invisible essence of reality. That is why Roland Barthes's already cited idea ("the most immediate criterion of an art work's modernity is that it is not 'psychological' in the traditional sense") could be generalized in spite of its simplicity. If we mean by "psychological" a work of art representing, evoking, or referring to psychological states of mind by means of traditional reference to reality, then Barthes's definition is valid for all forms of modern art. The absence of psychological depth appears differently in different genres, but the common feature is that this absence results not only in a disconnect of the surface from traditional concepts of reality, but also in a disconnect between elements of the surface. The place of the surface elements and their relation with each other is determined in premodern forms by their function in evoking the invisible background of some kind of empirical or spiritual reality. If this general reference is missing, the place of the surface elements become accidental or arbitrary, hence the necessity of an abstract structural concept. This concept may be required to express the reality of disconnectedness also regarding the relation between the surface elements, but by the same token it may be required to conceal the fundamental fragmented nature of reality represented according to the two basic alternatives of stylistic forms in the cinema: continuity and discontinuity.

This dimension of the form is specifically cinematic and has no systematic distinctive value in other arts. This is obviously a result of the temporal and fragmented nature of film technique, that is, the fact that a film is put together with independent fragments of time sequences. Bazin already realized the theoretical importance of the duality of continuity and discontinuity, only he interpreted it as an opposition between the filmmaker's emphasis on representing "reality" and the emphasis on juxtaposing well-composed images. When he wrote his article in the 1950s he really had two characteristic tendencies of artistic use of the cinema in mind: the early avant-garde based on montage on the one hand, and sound art cinema based on continuous and simultaneous recording of sounds and images, on the other. Late modern cinema proved Bazin right in citing this particular duality as a basic dimension of cinema's art form. Only this has nothing to do with an opposition between image and reality. In different ways they both can be forms of visual abstraction as well as forms of representing reality. In other words, continuity and discontinuity are values of film style rather than features of the film's concern for the subject matter.

Continuity and discontinuity are commonly measured through narrative. Huge time and space lapses as well as representation of different

Figs. 15–16. Fragmented visual texture: *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1966).

mental and time dimensions with little or no relationship to one another make a narrative fragmented. In this respect continuity and discontinuity are not dependent on the length of the takes. Frequent cuts and takes of a couple of seconds long do not necessarily make a fragmented structure; just like extremely long takes alone are not necessary for a continuous narrative. However, the audiovisual texture of a film can be also continuous or fragmented regardless of the continuous or disrupted character of the narration. The idea of continuity therefore can be conceived of as a two-dimensional feature of the film form: continuity of the narrative and continuity of the audiovisual texture. These two dimensions provide us with four basic variations of continuous/discontinuous narrative and visual texture. In modernist art cinema we have radical characteristic examples of all four types. Discontinuous narratives with emphasized continuous visual compositions can be illustrated by Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad*; a continuous narrative with discontinuous visual texture is characterized by the early films of Godard, such as *Breathless*, while his later films, such as *Week-end* or *Two or Three Things I Know About Her,* epitomize discontinuous narratives with excessively fragmented audiovisual texture. Continuous narratives with continuous imagery in modernism are best illustrated by the films of Antonioni in the period between 1957 and 1964.

Radical narrative discontinuity was very rare before the late modern period. Conscious use of fragmented narrative and/or visual texture characterize the avant-garde of the 1920s and to some extent the form of American film noir in the early 1950s. Some periods in the history of art film can be clearly characterized by the systematic preference of one or the other op-

tion. Roughly speaking, the 1920s' art cinema can be characterized by the use of rather fragmented, montage-based forms, while the thirties, forties, fifties, and the early sixties preferred generally continuous compositions. In some important cases a highly fragmented visual style appeared with modern cinema, and the spread of modernism caused the general trend to change around the mid-sixties to a dominantly fragmented style. This trend lasted until the late seventies, when continuity began to prevail again. In the early nineties the trend changed again, and fragmentation together with montage came into general use once more.

We are speaking of fashions rather than of "period styles," which means predominance rather than exclusivity in the occurrence of a given formal specificity. Very important counterexamples may be cited. In the twenties, the films of Jean Epstein or Phil Jutzi are important examples of a nonfragmented continuous style. In the mid-fifties Bresson's highly elliptical style goes counter current to the general tendency of continuous composition. During the eighties Peter Greenaway's and Derek Jarman's film styles are atypically fragmented just as the atypically continuous films of Béla Tarr; and Abbas Kiarostami during the nineties. What these counterexamples show is that these basic alternatives are always available, and their choice has a distinctive value within a style or a period.

What we can see in the modern period however is a unique phenomenon. Even though the novelty of the sixties as compared to the previous period was the appearance of a fragmented montage-based film style, the presence of the opposite tendency cannot be considered as an exception either like in the pre- and postmodern periods. Both tendencies were represented by equally influential and numerous films. We should rather speak of two equally typical versions of the late modern film form: *radical continuity* and *radical discontinuity.* This situation was quite different from that of early modernism. Since montage was by far the most important discovery of modernism in the twenties, radical forms of early modernism in the avant-garde as well as in the commercial art film were created on the discontinuous side. The counterexamples I mentioned cannot be qualified "radical" in their continuity style; they are simply not radically fragmented or not fragmented at all. We cannot find "excessive" use of continuity techniques in early modern cinema while there are a variety of them in late modernism.

I call these forms "radical" to emphasize their tendency to go beyond the usual measure of breaking or manifesting continuity in narrative art cinema. In both cases the reason for this stylistic "excess" is to reflect the disconnected, alienated, or one-dimensional character of empirical surface reality. What Andy Warhol said about pop art in one of his unusually articu-

lated interviews is a valid characterization of this aspect of modern cinema too: "Pop art just takes the exterior and makes it the interior or takes the interior and makes it exterior."[5] Radical discontinuity takes the "interior" (disconnected and fragmented vision of the world) and makes it the "exterior," while radical continuity takes the "exterior" (unarticulated and empty flow of time with no direction) and makes it the "interior." Andy Warhol as a filmmaker provided the most excessive examples of the latter kind of modernism (radical continuity), with his static, long-take real-time films within the avant-garde. But radical continuity was represented in the commercial art-film circuit too. Miklós Jancsó, Andrei Tarkovsky, or early Fassbinder are the main examples of this trend. Similarly the opposite pole, radical discontinuity, has representatives both in the avant-garde and in the commercial art-film circuit. Jack Smith is the blatant example in the first group, and Jean-Luc Godard in the second.

As I mentioned above, radical continuity is the result of the same conception about the fragmented nature of the world as articulated by its counterpart, only this fragmentation is expressed by means of a contiguous superficial texture where the elements have accidental, arbitrary connections. Both radical continuity and radical discontinuity can be associated with the distinction Robbe-Grillet made between fictional time and the time of watching or reading, and what Deleuze considered as the essence of modernism: the liberation of time from the logic of dramatic action.

There are four directors at the beginning of late modern cinema whose works in this period were the most influential in terms of developing the fundamental alternative versions of radical continuity and radical discontinuity in the modern film form. This does not mean obviously that these four modern directors are to be considered as the only "original" auteurs of modernism. Other original modern forms were created in different styles or genres, but whatever radically continuous or radically fragmented versions came subsequently, I would argue that later forms employed methods first elaborated by one of these four directors. Which is why we can say that the "primary formation" of late modern cinema was carried about by the early works of Bresson (especially *A Man Escaped*, 1956, and *Pickpocket*, 1959), Godard (especially *Breathless*, *The Little Soldier,* and *My Life to Live*), Antonioni (especially *L'avventura*, *La notte*, *Eclipse*), and Resnais (*Hiroshima*, *My Love* and *Last Year at Marienbad*). These films can be considered as a sort of foundation of modern cinema as regarding the basic alternatives of the cinematic form in the dimension of continuity and discontinuity, but some of them

5. Andy Warhol, "Rien à perdre," *Cahiers du cinéma* 205 (October 1968): 43.

were also fundamental initiators of various typical genres of modernism. Antonioni's films were the first manifestations of the modern melodrama, Resnais's films of the mental journey, and Godard's films (especially *The Little Soldier* and *My Life to Live*) of the essay film.

Radical Continuity

In his review of *L'avventura*, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze put Resnais and Antonioni side by side: "*Hiroshima*, *My Love* and *L'avventura* introduced what from now on has to be called by its own name: the new cinema."[6] Although the two directors differ in many important respects, they belong to modernism by the same virtue. Next to Antonioni, Alain Resnais was the other auteur who was consciously aiming at creating a form where accentuated continuity creates a dimension of time for the film. In his two early films, Resnais created the same immediate temporal surface as the one we find in *L'avventura*.

There are two basic original forms of radical continuity in modern cinema. Both forms are related to specific modern genres. We can even say that these genres were created by these auteurs in their specific versions of radical continuity. One form is represented by continuous and virtually aleatory movements of the characters disconnected from their environment. This is the continuous form of the travel, the investigation, and the melodrama genres. The source of this form was the classical neorealist "traveling" or "wandering film." The other is represented by the continuous way of representing a flow of mental associations through different layers of time and domains of consciousness, in short, the mental journey genre. The source of this form can be found in early modern cinema: in the stories of double consciousness of German expressionism and in the oneiric character of surrealist avant-garde.

The difference between the two trends can be found in the way they handle narrative time. The first trend comes out of the neorealist conception of continuity. It is epitomized by the early films of Antonioni and its main characteristics are the use of long takes, very slow development of the plot, which is otherwise classically linear, and extensive representation of scenes where "nothing happens," in other words, *temps morts* or in Antonioni's phrasing, the time preceding or following action. Although in this trend true and false, imagination and reality are well discernible,

6. Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, "Le facteur rhésus et le nouveau cinéma," *Cahiers du cinéma* 113 (November 1960): 49.

time has a considerable autonomy as slowness and length of takes separate time experience of the film from the events and actions developing in the plot. The main auteurs belonging to this trend include Antonioni, Jancsó, Angelopoulos, Duras, Garrel, Ackerman, Wenders, Schmid, and some films of Tarkovsky (*Andrei Rublev, Solaris, Stalker*).

The other trend is influenced by *nouveau roman* and is represented by films of Robbe-Grillet, Resnais, Chris Marker, Jean Cayrol, some films of Tarkovsky (*Childhood of Ivan, The Mirror*), or Bertolucci (*The Spider's Stratagem*). In these films the main narrative technique consists in merging different mental and temporal dimensions so that the transition from one to the other is imperceptible. With respect to both trends it is true that the film constructs a mental structure of experiencing time that is not subjected to the logic of the unfolding of the plot. In both trends the construction of the film is the ultimate reference for the time experience, rather than "reality" at the background of the plot. It is true for both trends that the essential part of what is happening is left to be constructed by the spectator. The spectator's imagination is much more involved in the construction of the story than it is in other trends.

Nonetheless, there is an important difference in the role time plays in the two trends. While in the post-neorealist trend the free flux of time helps the viewer to free herself from the constraints of a plot and activate her own mental processes, in the *Nouveau roman* trend the narrative creates a certain mental construction that leads the viewer's line of thoughts. These films work like a mental labyrinth with no way out. The different solutions for the plot are systematically destroyed as one plot is succeeded by another one until the viewer finds himself with a story that has multiple solutions, which are incompatible with each other. The contradictory nature of past, present, and future is homogenized by the continuous flow of narration, which simply makes passages between them without dissolving the contradictions. Following these narratives the viewer transgresses borders that were conceived as untransgressable. Continuity of narration in the *nouveau roman* form means a free flow of the narration within temporal and imaginary dimensions, whereas the content of the individual dimensions remains incompatible, in other words, fragmented. Viewing the films of the Antonioni trend by contrast is like watching the same ever-changing substance like fire, water, or sand blowing in a desert, which liberates the mind from the binding of any fixed mental constructions and usual articulation of time.[7] As Deleuze suggests, it is like watching time in its pure form.

7. Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier gives a fine analysis of this difference by comparing the methods of Robbe-Grillet and Antonioni and by opposing *nouveau roman* to

Imaginary Time in *Last Year at Marienbad*

Referring to his own *Last Year at Marienbad*, Resnais said that he wished to make a film for which it did not matter if reel one was projected after reel five, since the only time existing for a film would be the time of the film itself.[8] This is a very strong statement about the continuity of narrative time, where continuity means basically *circularity* in which linear reasoning of traditional narration is dissolved into continuously returning, logically disconnected series. In these two early films Resnais's goal was to suspend the flow of linear time for the sake of an almost spatial surface where past, present, reality, and imagination are brought onto the same continuous level, where getting from one dimension to another means a continuous flow. It was especially in *Marienbad* that Resnais realized that in order to achieve that, he had to emphasize monotony and continuity by stylistic means as well. His taste for long traveling shots was already well known from his earlier short films, especially *Toute la mémoire du monde* (1956) and *Night and Fog* (1955), though *Hiroshima* was not particularly marked by the long camera movement style. In *Marienbad* by contrast, he spectacularly returned to his long traveling shot style characteristic of his short films. But here, Resnais gave this technique a concrete symbolic meaning. The continuous flow of traveling shots in the endless corridors of the old castle represented a mind traversing different territories of memory and fantasy, until we arrive at a room full of frozen creatures who start to come alive when the voice of the narrator "touches" them. All we see happening in the film is the product of the narrator's mind, including the person appearing as the embodiment of the narrator. *Marienbad* is the story of the flow of memories and fantasies in a narrator's brain where there is no difference between layers of past, present, reality, and fantasy. Everything and everybody appears here as a creature of the narrator, and there is no distinction between events,

Flaubert. "Flaubert's vision is contrary to Robbe-Grillet, and the authenticity of Robbe-Grillet's vision in Antonioni's universe is all the more apparent that his initial effort was to oppose *nouveau roman*, and he first tried to represent stream of consciousness through the flux of time, which is the cinematic equivalent of the Flaubertian narration." I think Ropars-Wuilleumier is right to oppose Robbe-Grillet and Antonioni, but I do not think that the difference between them has ever disappeared. Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier, "L'espace et le temps dans l'univers d'Antonioni," *Études cinématographiques* 36–37 (1964): 29.

8. Cited by Benayoun, *Alain Resnais*, 105. The idea that in the films of Alain Resnais one might as well change the order of the reels emerged probably for the first time in a conversation between the *Cahiers* critics about *Hiroshima, My Love*, in 1959, Domarchi et al., "Hiroshima, notre amour."

places, and individuals having a real existence outside the narrator's mind and those fabricated entirely by him. The only discernible time here is the time of this continuous flow, which is basically the time of the screening. Should the order of the events be altered, the film shortened or expanded, the time of the story nevertheless would remain as real as one of a different film length or reel order. The story of *Marienbad* is the story of a narration of different fantasies and memories, and as long as the projection of the film is continuous, narration necessarily remains continuous too, as there is no difference between narration and narrated story. Even the occurrence of contradictory versions of the same event does not break continuity as long as it is narrated in the same continuous flow as the rest of the story. When the voice says, "No, I don't want you dead, I want you alive," and then the film goes back to a point where the woman is still alive, and provides another version of the story in which the character named M does not shoot her, even this cannot be taken as a sign of discontinuity, as there is no linear time frame behind the narration related to which this would be a reversion of temporal order. Radical continuity as represented by *Hiroshima*, and especially by *Marienbad*, means a free flow of conscious or unconscious contents of a narrative mind the ultimate carrier of which is always the flow of images the spectator is watching. It is precisely the emphasis on continuity that distinguishes this form from nonnarrative films. Continuity and unity in the form called the mental journey genre is assured by the reference to the narrative act, however unique, unusual, or disconnected the flow of scenes and images may seem in it. These films place every event on the same surface where the ultimate plot is none other than the flow of narration.

Radical Discontinuity

The other trend, radical discontinuity, was started by Bresson and Godard. Both auteurs were highly influential during the sixties and seventies for a variety of films and directors. Godard inspired most of the young directors starting their careers later in the 1960, such as Bertolucci, Sjöman, Kluge, and Fassbinder, while Bresson had a considerable impact on Pasolini, Straub, and Schmid. Godard's version of radical discontinuity is more genre-based and tends to inspire most of all the essay genre, while Bresson's discontinuous style is related rather to its highly elliptical narrative technique and the metonymic character of his visual compositions, regardless of the genre in which it is realized. I will discuss Bresson's fragmented style with relation to his version of minimalism in the next chapter.

The Fragmented Form according to Godard

Godard's discontinuous narrative technique had two sources: one is the condensed character of film noir narratives, the other is cinéma vérité, from which he created the essay genre. Concerning the audiovisual texture of his films, his most radical innovation was the collage technique (disconnecting the audio and the visual elements from the time-space continuum); together with the self-conscious use of jump cuts that was one of the most common practices among the French new wave directors (Truffaut, or Malle in *Zazie in the Subway*), and the followers of the new wave taste of playing with time-space continuity (Richardson, István Szabó, Sjöman).

His use of jump cuts to increase expressive effects of editing is inherited from Eisenstein's theory and practice of montage. The effect of jump cuts suggests to the viewer that actions are not represented in a film, they are rather created by authorial will, and their pace depends not on how they occur in reality, but what emotional effect the auteur wishes to exercise on the viewer. Again, the jump cut also functions as a narrative device by which events are not told clearly, they are rather *evoked.* Godard's jump cuts have been extensively analyzed and commented on in film theory over the decades, so there is no need here to recount that.[9] Let me take only one short sequence from *Breathless* in order to make clear what I mean by jump cuts creating emotional effects and replacing narration.

In the scene where Michel shoots the policeman the actual action that starts where Michel notices the policeman turning off the road is divided into five shots, and none of them lasts more than two seconds.

Michel goes from the front of the car to the door. He reaches in to find the gun (medium shot from his left).

Michel's right profile, panning down to his elbow (close up). (Voice shouts:) "Don't move!"

Continuing the pan on his lower arm from left to right to the gun.

The magazine of the gun, as it turns around, panning down the barrel (extreme close up).

(Sound of a shot.) The policemen collapses (medium long shot).

9. Comments on Godard's works and techniques are innumerable. It would be absolutely useless to single out a couple of books or articles. There exists, however, a book of references to all writings on Godard up till 1979, that is, of the period when Godard accomplished his cinematic revolution and introduced his basic techniques, such as the jump cut. Cf. Julia Lesage, *Jean-Luc Godard: A Guide to References and Resources* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1979).

The policeman arrives from Michel's left, and after the first shot the camera remains on his right. In other words, the camera, Michel, and the policeman create an axis, and the car is on the right of this axis. As Michel is facing the car from where he pulls out the gun, and we do not see the policeman moving to the other side of the car (which would not be a logical choice anyway, not to mention that there are bushes and trees on that side of the car) the policeman has two physically possible geometrical positions. Either he is on Michel's left or he is at Michel's back. We do not see Michel turning around, nor do we see that his position relative to the camera changes. So, according to the physical directions constructed by the edited sequence, when he shoots, the policeman could not be hit. Yet we see the policeman collapsing in a long shot from a viewpoint that was never introduced in the scene. What we have here is a rapid montage sequence of emblematic images that do not amount to constructing a realistic space in which what is made logical might in fact occur in reality. This sequence does not depict the shooting of the policeman; it rather constructs a series of images the conceptual meaning of which is the killing. The effect of evoking an event that could not occur the way it is represented is the same as in Bresson's *Pickpocket*, only discontinuity is more striking in this case.

Basically, the jump cut became for small-scale scene dramaturgy what episodic narration was for general plot structure. Both techniques serve to liberate narration for the sake of replacing rules of genre and narrative by subjective and conceptual constructions. Both techniques work through cutting an event, a story, or reality into small pieces and then putting them together again by giving them an individual order, structure, and rhythm. And this is exactly what Eric Rohmer in early 1959 meant by modernism when he defined it through the principles of cubism, when Godard was preparing *Breathless*. Time is created in this way rather than depicted or represented, the ultimate action we see is the act of creation, and the only real time of the film is the time of understanding this creation.

The next important aspect of the Godard form is the mosaic or collage-style composition. This style may characterize the narrative structure as well as the visual style but also the relation between the sound track and the image track. This aspect of Godard's style has always been identified as the most fundamental and most spectacular feature since the earliest commentaries on Godard's works. Truffaut recounts that Godard in a single day Godard would read the first and the last pages of as many as forty books. He would watch fifteen minutes from five different films on a single afternoon.

Fig. 17. The shooting of the policeman: *Breathless* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960).

(At that time this meant going in and out of five different movie theaters.)[10] Fragmented associative character is a quality not only of Godard's film style but also of his whole way of thinking, as one can tell from the way he speaks in his interviews and particularly from his book, *Introduction a une véritable histoire du cinéma.*[11]

Excessive fragmentation of the form was compensated in most early Godard films by almost constant verbal voice-over commentaries, which increasingly became in his midperiod one of the most important elements of his film form that bound together the fragmented visual and narrative elements. Continuous or fragmented verbal commentaries, most of the time referring to general philosophical ideas rather than to the immediate plot, made some of his films look like theoretical essays illustrated by moving images, where the quality of the visual character of the film was of less relevance than the intellectual content of the text. This highly subjective, fragmented style inspired and encouraged many young people from different intellectual backgrounds to venture into filmmaking, as Godard's films suggested that well-elaborated narrative structure and sophisticated technique were not necessary to make good films. But precisely because this style was founded in his peculiar way of thinking, very few imitations succeeded. The Godard form seemed to be easy to follow but has proven to be very difficult really to replicate. Those directors originally inspired by Godard, who after all found their own original voices, such as Jean-Marie Straub, or Chantal Ackerman, sooner or later dropped the radical fragmented style—Straub later, Ackerman right from the beginning, and their style went into the opposite direction, toward radical continuity.[12] In this respect Bernardo Bertolucci's case was very similar as his real originality unfolded when he finally stopped following the fragmented Godard form.

The only follower of Godard who continued the fragmented form and still became an original auteur in his own right was Makavejev. His particular version of the fragmented form consists of putting two or more different and independent stories or even films in an association that exists only on a conceptual level. Makavejev's *W.R.—The Mysteries of the Organism* is the most radical example of this form. Not only are there at least three independent layers in one film, but all of them are of different styles and genres. The film con-

10. Cited in Jean Collet, *Jean-Luc Godard* (Paris: Seghers, 1963).

11. Jean-Luc Godard, *Introduction a une véritable histoire du cinéma* (Paris: Éditions Albatros, 1980).

12. Still, she made a true "hommage to early Godard" in her short film *J'ai faim, j'ai froid* (*I Am Hungry, I Am Cold*, 1984).

sists of a conventional documentary, a comedy, and a cinema vérité parody sketch that never refer to one another directly and whose plots never meet. There is even a fourth layer of excerpts of old documentaries and scenes from Stalinist films. There is no attempt made by Makavejev to mix these layers or to connect them in any way. He preserves the stylistic integrity of each, does not try to create a heterogeneous texture; he rather creates a series of homogeneous texts. He repeats this technique in his famous film, *Sweet Movie*.

Serial Form

There is a form of discontinuity that we cannot identify with any of the modern auteurs' styles. This is a form whose visual characteristics of cannot be determined in terms of the organization of visual elements within a pictorial composition, nor in terms of the aesthetic source of these elements, nor in terms of camera movement, lighting, or shot length. Serialism is related to the structural composition of the film rather than with the visual style of the individual sequences, because it is a radical form of narration where the logic of juxtaposition is more important than the interior composition of the images, and it can have a variety of different stylistic elements mixed together. The visual aspect of the serial form derives from the way the elements are mixed rather than from what the elements look like in themselves.

It would be very easy to call serial structure a narrative form. In fact, serial composition has to do with the temporal order of the images, just like narrative. However, its logic is contrary to the time-space continuity system of all narrative forms.[13] Serial arrangement involves isolating certain types of formal elements from other types and in eliminating the hierarchical relationship between them. Thus, different stylistic layers will obey only their independent inherent logic. Modern art cinema, due to the nature of its institutional characteristics, never reached the level of pure serialism, characteristic of the avant-garde movements of "pure cinema" or the "structural cinema."

The idea of serial construction was first developed in modern music. The first film theorist to call attention to a similar serial construction in modern cinema was Noël Burch, but the essential idea goes back to Eisenstein's theory of intellectual montage, according to which the conscious interaction between different levels of signification dialectically constructs the

13. Discussion of the idea of the serial form as different from the topo-chronological system of narrative can be found in the writings of Gábor Bódy. See Gábor Bódy, *A végtelen ké* (Budapest: Pesti Szalon, 1996), especially 9–30.

unified meaning of the film. What Burch recognized in modern cinema was a tendency to vary the visual and rhythmic "parameters" of the film's style independently of the narrative.[14] Although he repeats several times that the stylistic parameters are "dialectically related" to the narrative, the essence of his finding is precisely the increased independence of different signifying systems rather than their dialectical unity. Thus Burch detected a very important tendency of the modern film form. Burch's notion of a system of stylistic "parameters" independent of the narrative system inspired David Bordwell to construct a film category that is difficult to explain solely by its narrative structure. He named the narrative method of such films "parametric narration." "Parametric" films are those, says Bordwell, where "the film's stylistic system creates patterns distinct *from the demands of the suzhet system*. Film style may be organized and emphasized to a degree that makes it at least equal in importance to suzhet patterns."[15] Burch's underlying and Bordwell's explicit analytical approach make the split between style and narrative salient. *But serial composition is not primarily a narrative procedure.* Separation of narrative and visual logic is only one form of that kind of analytic composition. Serial composition may be applied to separate series of motives also within the general systems of the narrative or the visual style. What we have here is a sort of "polyphonic" organization of the film's formal texture that consists in creating different series of formal elements running throughout the film independently of whether they have any function with regard to another signifying system.

The most important and most current function in the fiction film is naturally the narrative one. In classical narrative cinema, visual style supports narrative clarity, so when in a film the camera does not show the main "theme" as in the Bresson style, or when editing creates a confused sense of time and space like in the early films of Truffaut and Godard, or when we have to watch a scene much longer than it would take for us to understand its narrative substance, as in the films of Antonioni, Ozu, or Tarkovsky, the first impression one has in fact is that style has taken over narrative. However, visual style is never entirely subordinated to narrative, not even in the classical Hollywood cinema. The same story may be told in very different manners and styles. But the freedom of possible stylistic choices in a given period is much more limited for the maker of a popular film than for the maker of an art film especially in the modern period. The popular filmmaker's choice of

14. See Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, especially "Repertory of Simple Structures," 51–69.

15. Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 275, emphasis in the original.

Fig. 18. *Successive Slidings of Pleasure* (Alain Robbe-Grillet, 1974).

a particular effect or technique should never cross the limits of clear understanding of the narrative by the average audience, and this understanding is supported by stylistic conventions. As the "film-viewing intelligence" of the general audience is developing, more and more formal solutions and stylistic elements are available for popular film as well. Thus, blurring narrative clarity may also appear in popular filmmaking, as happened in the films of David Lynch in the 1980s, not to mention Quentin Tarantino's films (especially *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*) in which visual style clearly dominates narrative. Separation of visual style and narrative logic appears to be the most conspicuous phenomenon of modern cinema only when compared to classical Hollywood cinema. Within modern cinema independence of style and narrative logic are evident points of departure, and serial composition affects the logic of these systems according to the three dimensions of the film form (sound, image, and time), eliminating the hierarchy among and within them.

Serial form therefore is not another kind of narrative form. It is rather an alternative to narrative construction. It is a signifying system that creates its meanings by repetition and variation of elements in given paradigms. The obvious place for serial construction is avant-garde practice, and that is where one can find its most consistent use. Modern narrative art films can

be regarded as a phenomenon where the avant-garde and commercial art film got very close to one another. As a matter of fact in some cases there is no real ground for making a distinction. Some of Godard's political activist films, such as *The Joy of Knowledge* (1968) or *The Wind from the East* (1969), were started as commercial art films but were never released in the commercial circuit just because of their extremely nonnarrative, serial compositions. These films are at the borderline between modern art cinema and avant-garde.

One of the first important examples of serial composition in the commercial art film circuit was Resnais's *Muriel* (1963). While the film's narrative structure is quite ordinary, linear, and easy to understand, Resnais creates a system of image series consisting of short montage sequences of images and sounds interrupting the neighboring narrative scenes. On the one hand the narrative is organized quite conventionally, even the visual style is not extravagant, but on the other hand there is another system of images in the film that has nothing to do with the narrative. We can speak of two different constructions developing at the same time in the film.[16] According to one logic, the film tells the linear story of an encounter of two former lovers many years after their separation. They tell each other stories about their lives. According to the other logic the film questions and refutes the assertions and claims of the characters by diverting the viewer's attention from what is happening with the help of montage sequences of images that do not support the characters' dialogue or acts. The editing "parameter" of the film's style, which does not follow the rules of classical continuity, is not used here to blur narrative meaning; on the contrary, it is by these means that Resnais makes clear the main subject of the narrative, that is, the self-contradictory nature of the characters' communication. One can therefore only agree with Godard when he claims that "I haven't seen a film as simple as this one. It's Simenon."[17] A continuous narrative and a serial composition are opposed to one another in *Muriel*, and together they provide narrative meaning.

The serial construction introduced by *Muriel* can be found in several films made later in the modernist period. Films such as Varda's *The Creatures* (1967); Hungarian director Károly Makk's *Love* (1970) or *Cat's Play* (1972); *Sinbad* (1971), by another Hungarian, Zoltán Huszárik; and especially the later modernist period films of Alain Robbe-Grillet, *The Man Who Lies* (1968), *Eden and After* (1971) and *Successive Slidings of Pleasure* (1974) or Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1974) develop extensively serialism in modern art cinema.

16. For a detailed analysis of *Muriel* see Claude Bailblé, Michel Marie, and Marie-Claire Ropars, *Muriel* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1974).

17. In *Express*, 3 October 1963.

:7:
Styles of Modernism

I will distinguish four main styles representing the most important trends that influenced art filmmakers during the late modern period. Not all these tendencies were equally strong or influential in all periods during late modern cinema. As is often the case with matters of art historical categories, one can find only a few emblematic, clear cases of a given paradigm; most of the time we must suffice with mixed or transitory cases. Some of the general forms are not late modern inventions. Minimalism, for example, appeared already in the early modern period.

Some of the forms to be discusses may characterize classical films too, like theatrical stylization. What makes the styles genuine ingredients of modernism is their specific manner of depicting the main aesthetic formal principles: abstraction, subjectivity, and reflexivity.

Minimalist Styles

Minimalism is a systematic reduction of expressive elements in a given form. Minimalism achieves semantic richness by introducing the rule of systematic variation of motives instead of enhancing the expressive power of the motives by multiplying emotional effects of a similar kind. It involves reduction of redundancy as well as eliminating random diversity. Minimalism was characterized during the 1950s in the films of Dreyer, Bresson, Ozu, and Antonioni. But from 1959, stylistic austerity and reductionism became fashionable, and minimalism became the strongest and most influential trend of modern cinema. Even long after modernism's decline in the 1990s some auteurs like Jim Jarmusch, Béla Tarr, Aki Kaurismäki,

Abbas Kiarostami, and at times Takeshi Kitano continue to work according to modernist minimalism.

We can discern three main trends within modern minimalist form. The first is epitomized by Robert Bresson's films, and I will call it *metonymic minimalism*. The second, represented by Antonioni's films between 1957 and 1966, will be called *analytical minimalism*. The third is what I call *expressive minimalism*, and its main representative is Ingmar Bergman in his films made between 1961 and 1972.

Other major directors who in a given period of their modernist careers developed a more or less characteristic style based on one or more of these forms include Bertolucci, Saura, and Polanski in their debut films, Jerzy Kawalerowicz in his early films, Fassbinder in his 1969-1970 period, Jancsó before the early 1970s, Nemec in the 1960s, Straub in most of his films, Philippe Garrel in his early films, Chantal Ackerman in the 1970s, and Jean-Luc Godard between 1968 and 1975.

The Bresson Style

Bresson was the first to develop a radically minimalist form in modern cinema. His style became quite self-conscious and was crystallized in his *Pickpocket* (1959) even though in *A Man Escaped*, made in 1956, all the main stylistic components that would characterize Bresson's films through the rest of his career were already in place. Contemporary critics reacted immediately to the stylistic maturity of *Pickpocket*. The critic of *Cahiers* raised the idea that *Pickpocket* was nothing but a brilliant stylistic exercise.[1] Godard and Doniol-Valcroze contended that Bresson in fact changed his style in this film and that this marked a new period in his career. But Bresson claimed to have made no stylistic changes whatsoever in comparison to his previous film: "I can see neither arrival nor departure in *Pickpocket*. I am on the right track."[2]

The minimalism of Bresson's style has three main aspects. One is his extensive use of offscreen space; the second is his highly elliptical narrative style; and the third is a radically dispassionate acting style. It is predominantly because of his use of offscreen space that we name the Bresson-style of minimalism "metonymic," that is, a considerable amount of

1. Jean Wagner, "L'homme derrière l'objet (Pickpocket)," *Cahiers du cinéma* 104 (February 1960): 50.

2. Doniol-Valcroze and Godard, "Entretien avec Robert Bresson," 5.

narrative information is provided, especially by sound effects, from offscreen space that extends just beyond what is in fact visible onscreen. In other words, much of the plot is taking place in spaces not seen but contiguously attached to onscreen space. There are basically two reasons why a filmmaker would use offscreen space in the narrative process. One reason is to enhance dramatic tension, to raise the viewer's curiosity, which curiosity is then satisfied later by showing what was unseen before. The other reason is to reduce information redundancy: part of the narrative information is conveyed only by two channels, not by three: either by time and sight (we see what is happening) or by time and sound (we hear what is happening). In the latter case we speak of minimalist use of offscreen space. Certain events are never seen onscreen, we can only hear the sounds.

In the 1950s major predecessors of modernism, Robert Bresson and Carl Theodor Dreyer, were the first to introduce a kind of minimalism based on extensive use of offscreen space that was a result of a radically static composition.[3] Bresson later extended his minimalist style in such a way that even the scene that was supposed to be visualized became visually mutilated. In many cases Bresson used medium close-ups whose composition was unclear at the start of the shot. Objects or human bodies are cut off in an unusually nonfunctional manner. In certain cases it is clearly impossible to discern what is shown in the picture. Seconds later, however, something gets into the composition, usually in the middle of it, which finally confers meaning on the rest of the image. In one scene of his *Money* (1983), for example, Bresson gives a medium close-up of an opening between some vertical metal bars. Then we see the backs of humans from the wrist up to the neck passing through the opening and then quickly moving out of focus. We do not see who these people are and where they are going. A few seconds later, someone steps into the picture, almost covering the whole view, locks the opening and disappears—thereby disclosing in a close-up the big lock of the prison door now in full view. It is only then that we understand what we have seen before. This is an extreme reduction of narrative redundancy in the image, however no narrative information is withheld in any way, but only a part of the visual composition supports this information. The rest of these compositions consist of almost abstract visual elements. Bresson does not change shot length nor does he move the

3. Paul Schrader called it the "transcendental style." See Paul Schrader, *Transcendental Style in Film: Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972).

Fig. 19. Minimalist framing: *Money* (Robert Bresson, 1983).

camera to increase visual redundancy and enhance narrative clarity. The only way he emphasizes narrative information in the image is to place the most important visual element in the middle of an unstructured and partial composition.

Visually "mutilated" images go together in Bresson's film with a highly elliptical narrative technique. He uses a sort of disrupted narrative working with considerable hiatuses. His peculiar procedure was to construct his

scenes in such a way as to separate narrative construction from dramatic motivation. This involves showing only the most substantial part of the action. He cuts off preparatory or elaborating parts in scene construction and gives very little verbal explanation. This kind of dramatic construction was already partly present in his previous film, *Diary of a Country Priest*. The transitional character of this film is clearly indicated by two things. On the one hand, most of the scenes are extremely short, running under two minutes, like in a silent film, and dialogues are reduced to the minimum necessary for conveying the core information of the scene. On the other hand, there are some unusually long dialogue scenes, like the one with the countess and the priest, which runs exactly ten minutes, and in these scenes of course inexpressive acting is hardly possible. In *A Man Escaped* the dramatic construction of the scenes is much more balanced: the scenes are consistently short and concise. Only three scenes run more than two minutes long in this film. A typical structure of a scene consists of a very short opening sequence, if any, presenting some basic elements of the situation—typically a close-up or medium close-up of an object that will play an important role in that scene—followed by a very concise presentation of the main information, and virtually no closing. Right after the main information is disclosed, Bresson cuts.

Hence Bresson's films give the impression that they consist of a series of almost still images, much like in the silent cinema where tools of creating continuity in narration were much more restricted than in the sound era. Reference to silent film is emphasized also by visual austerity and by the increasingly ascetic use of dialogue. In the middle of his modernist period, starting with *Balthazar* (1966) and *Mouchette* (1967) Bresson entirely eliminated voice-over narration, which he had used abundantly in his films made in the 1950s, and reduced on-screen dialogues also to a necessary minimum.

Let us consider an example of the beginning of *Pickpocket* (1959). The very first shot of the action is a close-up of a lady's purse, from which a lady's hand pulls out some money and gives it to a man, who then goes to the box office to place a bid on the horse race. Then we see Michel, the main character, follow the lady to the edge of the course, and steal the rest of her money. It takes three shots for him to leave the course. It takes him thirty seconds from the end of the race to leave the racecourse. It is almost a real-time depiction of the event. However, right after he leaves the gate of the racecourse we see him followed by two police agents, and in the next shot he is already in a car sitting between them. We can hear his offscreen narration: "I thought I mastered the world. One minute later, I was caught." This is not only ellipti-

Fig. 20. A "mutilated" image: *A Man Escaped* (Robert Bresson, 1956).

cal narration, it is simply a creation of an unrealistic time span. Not only do we not see the lady discovering the theft, finding the police, explaining to them what happened, the police giving instructions to the agents who should start looking for the young man, or go directly to the gate expecting him to leave, but the thirty seconds (or one minute, according to the voice-over narration) passing between the end of the race and Michel crossing the gate simply do not leave enough time for all of this to happen (especially if we subtract from this the eleven seconds where we watch the lady walking away obviously unaware of the theft, which leaves precious few seconds for the police to catch him). As Bresson uses three shots emphasizing physical contiguity to show Michel's itinerary to the gate from the point where the race ends he suggests continuity of action. But it turns out that these three shots are radically cut off from the continuous flow of action. They stand for a very different system of events. There is a complicated story behind these three short shots that is not referred to in any sensible way, as if the three shots took place in three different dimensions of time all at once. While we see a thirty-second almost continuous period of time, the voice-over relates that this was in fact a one-minute lapse, but realistically this must have covered a much longer time. It is as though the continuous sequence showing Michel walking out of the racecourse was in fact not a representation of what happened, not even in a concise way, but of what Michel wished to

have happened. That is the only way the sudden and surprising appearance of the policemen can be understood. Apparent continuity covers a radical discontinuity. Without signaling any sort of time lapse, the mere fact of cutting alone stands for whole stories, long periods of hours, days, or more. This is already very clear in the following two shots, which altogether last fifteen seconds. The first shows Michel sitting between the two agents in a car, the next shows the last sentence of the investigation at the police station where the inspector sets him free. Obviously, without inserting any image of time lapse, Bresson covers several hours with these two shots. The elliptical narrative technique, together with concise scene dramaturgy, has an important effect on acting. Clearly, there is not much time for much expressive acting in such a construction.

The other characteristic of Bresson's style was the extremely dispassionate acting style, which he considered important enough to develop on a theoretical level between 1950 and 1958.[4] Bresson's conception is fundamental for understanding the style of acting in many films of the great modernist auteurs in the period, and in many ways the same ideas can be applied to the character representation of Fellini, Antonioni, Godard, and Jancsó.

Abstract Subjectivity and the "Model"

Bresson opposes two kinds of character representation: one achieved by *actors*, the other by *models*. He makes the case for a character representation by *models*, which he claims is proper for cinema. An actor plays different roles, each of which is different from the actor's personality. But, at the same time, an actor cannot be entirely someone else: "Actor: It is not me you watch and hear, it is an *other.* But as he cannot be entirely an *other,* he is not this *other.*" And, "An actor brings forward something that is not in himself really." An actor therefore always tries to be a different person, and this ends up as artificial play. An actor cannot identify totally with her role. A model by contrast is always the same person. The role she plays is essentially the same person that she is in reality. In this sense, the model does not *play* anybody; a person on the screen *is* what the model *is*. The model is "the way of being the persons of your film, it is being themselves, it is remaining themselves." But the person on the screen is not the totality of the person the model is in real

4. See especially Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*. I will quote from the Gallimard edition (Paris, 1975).

life; the screen person is only a part of her. The director reduces her to the traits that are useful for the film. A model on the screen is not a live person in any sense, she is a *pure essence*, an abstract person, a spiritual ego detached from all rational connections. A model is "his nonrational, nonlogical ego that the camera records." Hence from this is derived a strange relationship to psychological representation. There is no doubt that a character represented by a *model* is psychologically determined. But this psychology is not a set of rules according to which instincts, subjective intentions, emotions, and different states of mind can be explained and re-presented in other roles or films. A model is a singular, unique person who expresses no intentions, has no consciousness that would link them to general behavior patterns.[5]

It is as if Bresson wanted to say that the model is in a way inhuman: it is part of a real individual's personality, but that particular part that is not associated with rationality. The model is an irrational psychological abstraction. Irrational here means not a nonsense, nor animality. It refers rather to a behavior that is not determined from the outside, it is totally autonomous and impossible to describe by commonsense motivation. The model must act like a psychic *automaton* without any attempt to express inner motivations. The "causes are not in the models," which is to say that the model should not act in a way that can be interpreted based on the individual's social, moral, or practical motives. The only way the individual's behavior can be interpreted is based on his psychic singularity, which cannot be reduced to any exterior factor. The model is a singular phenomenon of nature, it is like a unique object. "Persons and objects have the same mystery," says Bresson, and a model must flow smoothly into the order of objects. "It is necessary that the persons and the objects of your film go *together at the same pace*." A model on the screen must become an object of nature as any other thing, and act according to the part of his nature that is useful for the film as any other object.[6] One can easily recognize in Bresson's conception about acting the same antipsychological spirit that was the basis of the French *nouveau roman* of the fifties and sixties.

There are many ways Bresson brings about this extreme abstraction of his "models," but the central feature of this is the reduction of human contacts. That is the way Bresson can express the singularity, autonomy, and objectivity of his characters, but this way they become in a sense empty. It

5. Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, citations and references from 52, 68, 87, 89, 86, 83, 22, 58.

6. Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, 64, 23, 80.

is their autonomy, independence, or disconnectedness, their freedom in the final analysis that appears as a certain emptiness or mechanical behavior. This emptiness however, is counterbalanced by Bresson by a sort of "mystical integrity" related to a deeply religious conception of the human psyche.

Bresson and His Followers

The influence of the Bresson style of minimalism extends in many directions during the modern period, especially in the form of isolated techniques taken over by various filmmakers. Reduced scene dramaturgy was widely used in French cinema especially by Godard and Truffaut. The model style of acting was taken over by Tarkovsky, who had an unreserved respect for Bresson. The most consistent follower of Bresson was Jean-Marie Straub, especially in his *Not Reconciled.* Later Straub developed his style towards theatricality that was fashionable in the early 1970s, but in *Not Reconciled* the Bressonian mise-en-scène is clearly recognizable. There is virtually no acting and no interaction between the characters, who basically recite monologues in a highly dispassionate tone. The scenes last as long as their monologues, leaving as little space for description of the environment or of the character's state of mind as possible. Straub has been, as he puts it, "careful to eliminate as much as possible any historical aura in both costumes and sets, thus giving the images a kind of atonal character."[7] Acts are depicted as symbolic gestures rather than as real physical facts, and so events of the plot for the most part are told rather than shown. For example when Johanna shoots someone who is named "her grandson's murderer" on the balcony, although the script reads "we see Johanna take aim and shoot at the next balcony," what we see is Johanna shooting without aiming in a direction that is impossible for the viewer to determine, and even the sound of the shot is barely heard. She hardly even raises the pistol. Her act is reduced to the signaling of a gesture. This aspect of Straub's style makes it rather theatrical and distances it from its Bressonian origins. The theatrical tendency becomes stronger in his subsequent films. *Moses and Aaron* (1974), on the one hand is probably his most radically minimalist film, and on the other hand, the theatrical character of this minimalism is the most perfectly developed. The only setting is the ruins of an antique arena where two characters and a chorus perform Arnold Schönberg's opera.

Bresson's influence was transferred by Straub to early Fassbinder and early Daniel Schmid. And as Serge Toubiana said in 1989 about *Pickpocket*,

7. Cited in Richard Roud, *Jean-Marie Straub* (New York: Viking Press, 1972), 40.

"it influenced a whole generation of filmmakers who started their careers in the 1960s."[8]

Analytical Minimalism: The Antonioni Style

The most remarkable manifestation of this form of minimalism can be found in the early films of Antonioni, which feature austere compositions associated with long takes and in some cases complicated and long camera movements. I call this form "analytical" for two reasons. One is its tendency toward geometrical compositions, the other is the split Antonioni makes between different dimensions of the form: the background and the characters on the one hand, the plot and the viewer's time experience on the other.

Antonioni's use of landscapes as the background of his wandering characters has been one of the most conspicuous elements of his style. The visual characteristics of his landscapes and their role in the plot are important watermarks of Antonioni's breaking away from his neorealist roots. Poor or desolate environments were of course not new to modern cinema. Neorealist films were situated in poor neighborhoods, often emphasizing emotional or spiritual emptiness as well, especially in films by Rossellini like *Germany, Year Zero* (1948) or *Stromboli* (1950). The dramatic tension between the characters and the environment disappears, and their communication is broken. Their relationship is reduced to radical isolation or alienation. Emptiness and desolation of the environment are not the indications of a social or cultural condition represented by the background world, and the characters are in a way disconnected from this background.

Psychic Landscape?

It seems quite obvious to draw a parallel between the bareness of the landscape in Antonioni's films and the depressed state of mind of the characters who wander around within this landscape. This similarity drove more than one critic to characterize Antonioni's use of landscape as one of expressing the character's psyche. Relating to *The Cry*, Seymour Chatman remarks: "Antonioni relied on the technique of 'landscape-as-state-of-soul.'" And he adds, "And those other objects serve as metonymic signs of his inner life."[9]

8. Serge Toubiana in "Table Ronde: Auteur de Pickpocket," *Cahiers du cinéma* 416 (February 1989): 26.

9. Seymour Chatman, *Antonioni; or, The Surface of the World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 90.

Chatman is very cautious not to call Antonioni's landscape "symbolic," which is why he uses the term "metonymic" suggesting that the landscape is a physical "continuation" of the character's inner world. He is quite right to avoid the idea of symbolism in characterizing the landscape, which would contradict Antonioni's realism as well as the idea of the neutrality of the object world. The term "metonymy" refers to physical contiguity. It suggests that the characters are organic parts of the landscape they move around in, and the objects of the landscape and its general atmosphere express the same emotional meanings as the character's behavior. However, only the very early Antonioni films, in which landscape does not play an eminent role, would support this thesis. The film of the early period in which landscape has the most distinguished function is *The Cry*, where the autumnal, hazy, and grim atmosphere of the landscape apparently corresponds to the main character's depressed state of mind. Ironically, however, this film was not meant by Antonioni to represent a landscape evoking psychological states of mind: "The landscape also has a different function here. I used it in my earlier films to better define a situation or a psychological state. In *The Cry* I wanted to create a landscape of memory: the landscape of my childhood."[10] Already in this film Antonioni arrived at another—modernist—conception of using the landscape: that which isolates it from the psychology of the characters.

In the series of his modernist films, starting with *L'avventura* it would be very difficult to argue that the atmosphere of the landscape corresponds to the state of mind of the characters. In most cases the environment in which the stories take place is rich, lively, and beautiful. The first part of *L'avventura* is set on an extremely barren island covered with rocks and with nothing but the sea around it. But the second part of the film takes place in various beautiful locations in Sicily. We can see the beautiful seashore, the mountains, and the lushness of the plants. Antonioni highlights not only the beauty of the landscape but that of the constructed environment too. Claudia and Sandro visit beautiful cities and churches, stay in superb old palaces and hotels. From time to time there are scenes with bare landscape too, especially the scene in the deserted town of Noto, but this is a brief scene. Instead of contiguity, there is a strong contrast between the characters' desolate psychic state and the diversity and beauty of the world around them. It is the same contrast we can find in Rossellini's *Journey to Italy* (1954), but in Antonioni's case there is no reconciliation.

10. André S. Labarthe, "Entretien avec Michelangelo Antonioni," *Cahiers du cinéma* 112 (1960): 3.

Fig. 21. Empty landscape: *L'avventura* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960).

Fig. 22. Romantic landscape: *L'avventura.*

La notte is a modern urban milieu that emphasizes geometrical flat surfaces and bare streets, but in the second half the heroes first go into a bar, then go to a crowded party in a rich villa. In *Eclipse* Antonioni emphasizes even less the mere visual quality of desolation: most scenes take place in highly crowded places, like the stock market, the bar, the park, and the office. Instead of emphasizing the loneliness of the main character by the visual character of the spaces, he rather creates a feeling of loneliness within an agitated environment. Psychic emptiness is evoked with the help of a series of disappearances throughout the story, as discussed above.

Finally, in *The Red Desert* the industrial setting dominates the film almost in an abstract painterly way, inasmuch as Antonioni overemphasizes the colorfulness of industrial installations, industrial smoke, and liquid that dominate throughout the film. In this film the tension between the estranged world of the story and the colorful diversity of the environment almost creates an independent and purely ornamental use of the objects and the space. As a genuine modernist, Antonioni truly believed in the beauty of the industrial landscape:

> It is a simplification to say . . . that I accuse the inhuman industrialized world where the individual is oppressed, which leads to neurosis. On the contrary, my intention was to translate the beauty of this world in which even the factories can be beautiful . . . The lines, the curves of the factories and of their

Fig. 23. Industrial landscape: *The Red Desert* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1964).

> chimneys are probably more beautiful than the lines of a tree that we have seen so many times. This is a rich, lively, useful world.[11]

The most general characteristics of Antonioni's landscapes are not that they are expressing human states of mind. Quite on the contrary: they create a contrast between beauty and liveliness in the material world and the depressed or even neurotic psychic states of mind of the characters. This world seems to be devoid and inhuman not because it is empty or because it is physically or visually inhuman and lacking beauty, but because it is lacking human contact. It lacks not only contact between humans but also contact between humans and the environment.

For Antonioni human alienation is fundamentally a problem of adaptation. In his opinion the individual has not yet learned to adapt to the modern environment; the individual has not learned how to feel at home in it. Antonioni is criticizing neither this environment nor the modern industrial world; he is rather longing for its appropriation:

> There are people who have already adapted [to the new world], and others who still have not because they are attached too strongly to obsolete structures or rhythms of life. . . . I would like to live already in this new world. Unfortunately, we are still not there, and that is the drama of more than one postwar generation. I believe that the years to come will bring violent transformations in the world as well as within the individual.[12]

If Antonioni's landscapes are "empty," it is not because they express by their physical aspect the characters' mental state. It is because the characters cannot find their lives in there however beautiful they may appear. The characters cannot interact with their environment. They wander around in it not because they want to find something that is out there, but because

11. Jean-Luc Godard, "La nuit, l'eclipse, l'aurore: Entretien avec Michelangelo Antonioni," *Cahiers du cinéma* 160 (November 1964): 10–15.

12. Godard, "La nuit, l'eclipse, l'aurore."

they have lost their human contact with that world. And because there is no psychological contact between the characters and the environment in which they are moving around, the depiction of the surroundings becomes independent of the narration.

And that is the ultimate source of the environment's deserted atmosphere. No matter how crowded or eventful the scenes, what we feel is emptiness because they are detached from the lives of the characters. The end of *Eclipse* is the best example of this. What we see is not an entirely empty square. People come and go, buses arrive, passengers exit the bus, and cars go by. It is only the two main characters who are missing, who do not come to their rendezvous. Somebody is not there whom we expect, something is not happening what we expect to happen, and that is what makes the streets feel really empty even though they are physically crowded.

Antonioni's landscapes are not any more expressive than his actors' play. The actors' play is inexpressive precisely in the sense that they do not represent a diverse variety of emotional states. Landscape is inexpressive in the same sense: whatever it shows, it does not represent a variety of different elements, rather a monotonous variation of a small set of visual elements until they grow devoid of any emotional meaning, keeping only their pure aesthetic sense devoid of practical human contact to the point where representation of the background becomes almost self-contained. Thus, landscape in modern Antonioni films, especially the ones following *The Cry,* is not a projection of the characters' interior life. They are *aesthetic* rather than *psychic*. The visual dimension of these films does not represent what is hidden from our eyes, because nothing is hidden. Everything is represented on a pure aesthetic surface. All one can say is that landscape in Antonioni's early films is as emptied of human contact as the soul of the characters wandering around in it, which is to say in the final analysis that Antonioni's landscapes are simply the motivical variations of the characters' way of acting. That is precisely how the Antonioni style can be seen as a purely ornamental use of landscape, like in the early films of Jancsó. And this possibility is already clearly detectable in *The Red Desert*.

Continuity

It is very often taken for granted that Antonioni's style involves extreme long takes and also long camera movements. However, it is only true for what became the "Antonioni style" during the 1960s, but not for Antonioni's own style of this period. Seymour Chatman has remarked that at the time of *L'avventura* there was not much difference in shot length between

an Antonioni film and the average Hollywood film of the time.[13] Both *L'avventura* and *La notte* contain more than four hundred shots with an average shot length over 15 seconds (17.3 seconds in *La notte*, 18.4 for *L'avventura*, still double that of the average Hollywood film). On the other hand, in the case of *Story of a Love Affair* (1950), the average shot length is 33.6 seconds, containing several shots over two minutes. Excessive long takes and long camera movement style characterize Antonioni only at the beginning of his career; in later films, especially in the "great period," his rhythm approached that of the average European modernist art films. As he explains:

> Naturally, my technique has changed, as I changed my mind. Earlier, I thought that I had to follow a character as long as possible so that I wouldn't miss the truth about him. Hence came the need for endless and very complicated camera movements, and the fact that I refused to make counter shots. Now I think by contrast that it is necessary to create a multiplicity of approaches to a character by varying the points of view, and also that I shouldn't hesitate to treat the setting separately, again for the sake of the phenomenological truth. . . . My technique now, which seems a regression to you, is in fact much more modern and audacious than what I used in *Chronicle*.[14]

The real interest of the Antonioni films of this period is that he does not use extraordinary technical tools to create the atmosphere of radical continuity of his films, as does Resnais, for example, with his spectacularly long traveling shots in *Last Year at Marienbad*. Instead, Antonioni introduces a very peculiar dramatic device that appeared already in *The Cry*, which he will only radicalize in his modernist works, the most spectacular and developed example of which he will provide in *Eclipse*. I will call this procedure *inverted dramatic construction*.

The main point in this structure is that Antonioni inverts the order between the peak of dramatic tension and plot development. Usually, dramatic tension has its climax at the very end of the plot and is related to the solution of the main conflict. In Antonioni's films, from *The Cry* up to *Eclipse*, the peak of dramatic tension takes place at the very beginning of the film, *before* the development of the plot. It is still related to a conflict obviously, but what follows the exposure of the conflict is not the solution of it, but rather the "eternalizing" of it by emptying out the initial situation of its dramatic tension. The situation that was introduced as containing an unresolved and highly disturbing element for the characters becomes a sort of normal everyday state of their existence, and also the extent to which it was disturb-

13. Chatman, *Antonioni*, 115.

14. Interview with Antonioni in *Témoignages chrétien* 9, no. 7 (1962).

ing or even unbearable for them diminishes so as to reach sometimes a zero level as one can see it in *Eclipse*. The principle meaning of the situation the characters find themselves in is thus *continuity*, or eternity of the situation's existence. It is the continuous emptying out of their lives that provides the dynamics of these plots, which develop toward a certain end marked by a point where the characters realize the radical emptiness of their lives. And in *Eclipse* even this point is missing. Whether or not they are aware of their situation, the main characters simply disappear from the film, which ends with the pictures of a total eclipse, or total disappearance of the light. Rather than ascending or wavering, dramatic tension is monotonously descending in the three major early modernist films of Antonioni, and it is that monotony that represents radical continuity in these films even though their editing technique or camerawork would not include any radical solutions.

Antonioni's technique is in sharp opposition to Bresson's style. Bresson shows from every action only those scenes where the essence of the given event happens, and very little of the path that leads to the event. That is how he makes the spectator jump through huge gaps in time. By contrast, Antonioni makes the spectator follow the different paths his characters have taken to arrive at the momentous event. But after the first five to fifteen minutes of his films where real action takes place, virtually no scene contains any action of which the spectator could grasp the real sense as to how it helps the plot unfold. We follow long paths, but we never know whether we are getting any closer to a supposed goal. The dramatically tense beginnings of his films always pose an important question that is able to keep the viewer's curiosity alive throughout the film. The construction of the stories that follow the exposition is such that they constantly raise the possibility of getting close to a solution. There is a kind of extended suspense in these films whereby Antonioni makes the spectator believe that something is hidden behind the events, that something's happening beyond the frame (just as in Bresson films). And it is only at the end that it turns out that nothing happens behind the scenes. Where has Anna gone (in *L'avventura*)? After all, we will never find out, and our heroes also have lost interest in that question. Can the friend be saved (in *La notte*)? It turns out that he cannot be saved, but that is not Lidia's only or biggest unresolvable problem. Will Claudia start a new life or go back to Riccardo (in *Eclipse*)? After all that, we don't know, because he simply disappears from the story. Nothing is hidden, what we see is what there is. Editing for Antonioni is not a way of hiding important information or creating a sense of a metaphysical dimension of the story. Antonioni looks for the "phenomenological truth," as he puts it, not for the

metaphysical truth like Bresson. As a matter of fact, every technical device became neutral for him, just as he obviously lost interest in using spectacular techniques of continuity because the monotonous nature of his neutral events constructed a continuous and immediate surface with no holes in it whence any change could emerge.

Antonioni and His Followers

The Antonioni style was further developed and radicalized in two ways. One is what I will call *ornamental continuity,* initiated by Jancsó and followed by Theo Angelopoulos, which I will discuss below in the section on ornamental style. The other is what I will call *minimalist continuity style.* The two main representatives of this form are Wim Wenders, especially in *The Goalie's Fear of the Penalty Kick* and *Kings of the Road,* and Chantal Ackerman in *Jeanne Dielman* but especially in *The Meetings of Anna* (1978). Although these films reduce the Antonioni form to one of its aspects and make excessive use of it, especially Ackerman, this aspect is the one that in fact proves to be the most productive even after modernism, as witnessed in the films of Jarmusch, Tarr, Kiarostami, Jafar Panahi, and Kitano. This aspect is the predominance of *temps mort* in the narrative, that is, a representation of a time sequence in the protagonist's life, where nothing happens, for example, transitions from one location to another, waiting, having nothing to do. These extremely long takes, with extremely minimalist use of setting elements, are combined in the early films of Philippe Garrel, but these elements as well as the acting are highly symbolic and mythological, thus ornamental.

One of the films most consistently constructed upon the reduced and radicalized minimalist continuity style is Ackerman's *The Meetings of Anna.* The story consists of a series of accidental or planned encounters of a woman film director traveling on her promotion tour in Germany. The encounters

Fig. 24. Empty landscape: *Kings of the Road* (Wim Wenders, 1976).

Figs. 25–26. Accidental encounters: *The Meetings of Anna* (Chantal Ackerman, 1978).

themselves however are not the focus of the film. The biggest portion of the film's running time is spent showing Anna waiting or going from one place to another. The film's narrative form is circular in the strictest sense of the term. Nothing that happens in the film has any effect on any other event. Nothing changes from beginning to end; everything remains the same. *Temps mort* where nothing happens is therefore not a link between events. It is the other way around: the remnants of what one could call an event separate the continuous sequences of *temps mort*. That is what makes the film's style highly static. Ackerman systematically uses only two types of shots: static medium to long shot (typically Antonionian) or a few occasional lateral traveling medium shots. There is no panning, no in-depth traveling shots, just as there are no close-ups. Empty space/time is the prevalent subject matter of the images.

A good example is the scene in which something emotionally intense could be described. Anna meets her mother, whom she has not seen for three years, at a Brussels railway station. Anna gets off the train, walks across the station till she notices her mother at the end of the hallway. It is on Anna's face in a medium shot that we see that her mother has noticed her, too. She then goes to her mother, but the camera does not follow her, so they finally meet in a long shot, very far from the camera. They hug each other and start talking, but since we are far away, we cannot hear a word of what they say to each other, nor can we see the emotions on their faces. Then they leave, but the camera keeps showing the empty hallway for another three seconds. The whole shot lasts fifty-three seconds, of which the "action" part lasts thirty-eight seconds, and during this time Ackerman keeps the viewer at a distance. In other words, the camera remains close to the protagonist as long as nothing happens. As soon as action occurs, the camera stays out of it. Another example is when Anna goes to the cinema where her film is being screened. Ackerman stages the scene when she leaves the hotel to go the cinema, and the very next shot is when she leaves the theater. The "action" sequence is omitted. This film is one of the most radical ones of the Antonioni form not because of extensive use of *temps mort* but because no other film could eliminate progression of the plot as much as this film with the help of its serial composition of *temps mort*.

Within the continuity form Wim Wenders's early style remains the closest to the Antonioni form. In this respect *Kings of the Road* (1976) is the turning point, where Wenders returns to more classical depth staging. Wenders develops the picaresque aspect of this form rather than the melodramatic side. He follows Antonioni in going through different landscapes and in creating the atmosphere of alienation by disconnecting his characters from

the given environment rather than using the environment's own expressive visual traits. His most common shot is medium shot to long shot, just like in the "great period" Antonioni films, his takes are rather lengthy and concentrate on moments of emptiness, and the mere passing of time gives priority to the atmosphere of the landscape rather than to the dramatic aspect of the plot. This is especially true for *Alice in the Cities* (1974).

A peculiar minimalist style, a mixture of dispassionate Straubian theatricality and the Antonionian long take style, was created in the earliest films of Fassbinder (1969–70). Static compositions, long takes with no movement whatsoever in them, and entirely empty spaces with bare white walls around the characters are the most characteristic traits of this early Fassbinder style, especially in *Katzelmacher* (1969) and *Love Is Colder Than Death* (1969). In his later films, Fassbinder's theatricality and motivical saturation takes over and pushes minimalist traits of his style in the background.

We can find minimalist versions in various genres, but some typically modern genres are more likely to attract minimalist style than others. Closed-situation dramas are most of the time minimalist, since the nature of the dramatic form requires a limited space, a limited number of characters and, more often than not, a highly restricted narrative frame. An early example of this type is Roman Polanski's first film, *Knife in the Water* (1962), which takes place for the most part on a sailing boat on a lake with only three characters. Very little information is provided of the lives of the characters, but the nature of the drama is such that this information is not necessary to follow the unfolding of the conflict between them, just like in Kawalerowicz's *The Night Train* or in Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*. Stylistically, Polanski's film is the most minimalist of all, by its choice of environment and the extremely reduced amount of signifying elements.

However, there is a film that utilizes all the possibilities of the closed-situation dramatic form to create a minimalist style in almost all aspects of the form. This is Carlos Saura's third film, *The Hunt* (1965). The story is about four men going for a rabbit hunt in some deserted area of Spain. The whole story takes place in the desert. We learn hardly anything about the characters apart from some hazy allusions to their past evoking the war and killing. It also turns out that they are long time friends, yet some of them however have not seen each other for some time. Even though there is quite a lot of dialogue in the film, still the information they convey is restricted to immediate reflections on what they are doing and to the mounting tension between them. Unlike in Polanski's *Knife*, here the nature of the drama makes the lack of narrative information a stylistic element, as the film constantly alludes to their past, which suggests to the viewer that the source of the

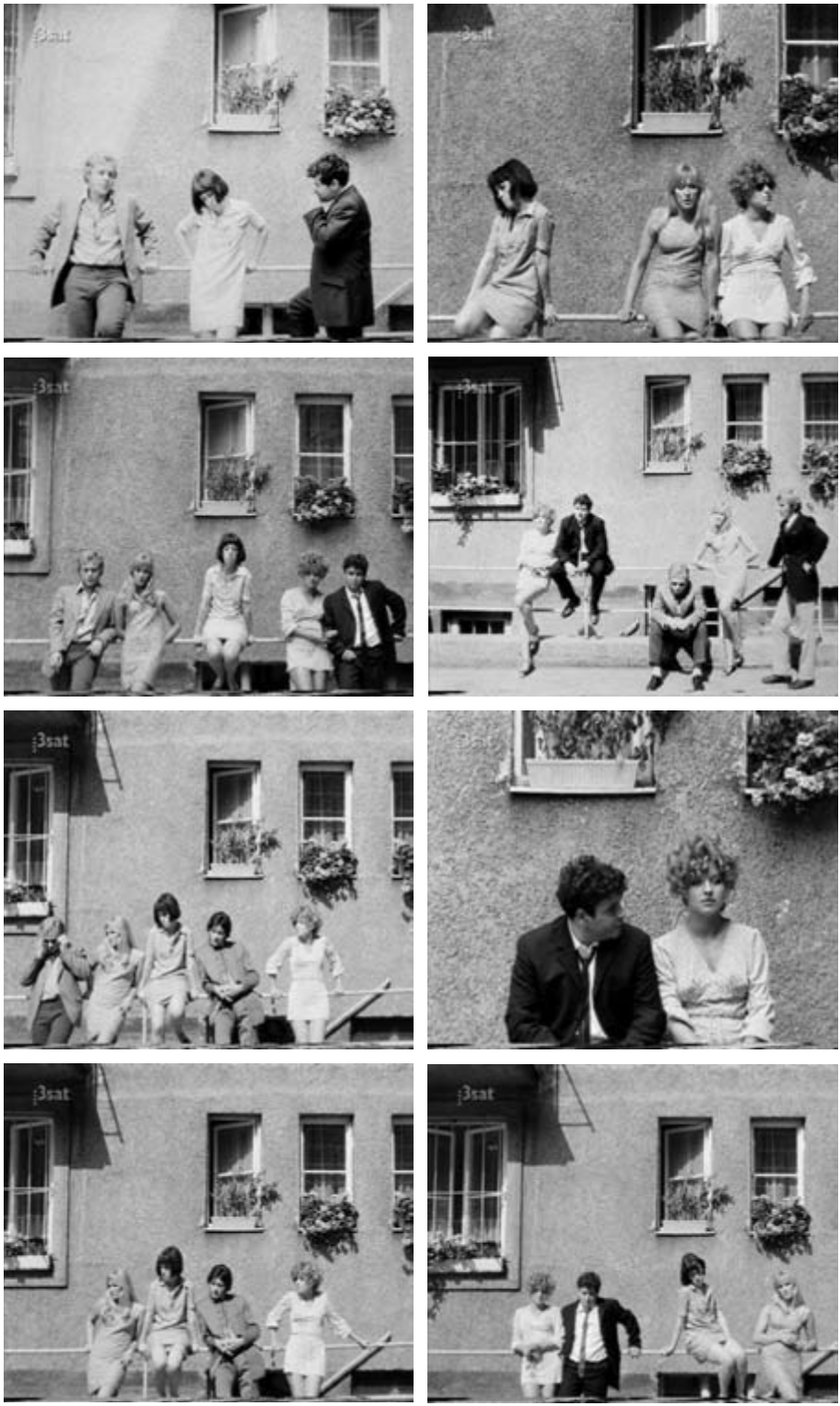


Fig. 27. Minimalist style and variation principle: *Katzelmacher* (Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1969).

tension between them is hidden in undisclosed past events. The characters' acting style is rather dispassionate except in the moments of high tension, which is why the brutal massacre at the end in which they shoot one another to death comes quite unexpectedly. The story is a perfect closed-situation drama in that the plot is developed from the fact that the characters remain confined in a limited space (in this respect even a spot in the desert can be considered a limited space). Nothing diverts the viewer's attention from what is immediately given in the story, neither on the narrative, nor on the visual level, even though Saura does not apply any radical tools to enhance the minimalist effects of his style.

Continuous visual compositions however may have a considerable amount of saturating effect either by the movement that always brings new objects in the image, or by contemplation, which lets the viewer's imagination discover "deeper" layers of the image and is inspired by the mere passing of time. The first version represents the transition from minimalism to ornamental style as is well exemplified by Jancsó. Jancsó's style is extremely minimalist in many respects: most often, his stories take place in deserted and confined spaces, he uses inexpressive acting style and characters without individual personality, there is very little dialogue in his films. However, in other respects his style is the opposite of minimalism: abundance of symbolic motives, huge masses of supporting characters, and complicated and symbolic camera and character movements increasingly make his films of the early seventies examples of a certain ornamentalism, which will be discussed below.

The saturating effect of excessive continuity and monotony was utilized by several films both from the avant-garde and from the commercial art-film circuit. Andy Warhol (e.g., *Sleep*, 1963; *Empire*, 1964), Chantal Ackerman (*Hotel Monterrey*, 1972), and most importantly, Andrei Tarkovsky (*Solaris*, *Mirror*, and *Stalker*) constructed forms on showing the same thing or the same movement unchanged over a long period of time.

Expressive Minimalism

Although minimalism involves the reduction of expressive formal elements, this does not mean that all minimalist styles are necessarily inexpressive like that of Bresson and Antonioni. Ingmar Bergman is a case in point.

Most of the time Bergman's modern films are also closed-situation dramas, with an increasing amount of minimalism in their styles, which reach their apogee in *Rite*. His minimalist style is based, apart from the bare and confined landscapes, on his consciously consistent use of close-ups, which

Fig. 28. Expressive minimalism: *Hour of the Wolf* (Ingmar Bergman, 1968).

betrays the influence of Dreyer's modernism. Bergman's use of close-ups becomes clearly more consistent in his modernist period, that is, starting with *Through a Glass Darkly*, which seems a compensation for the inexpressive effect of extreme reduction of other elements such as characters and landscape. While Bergman's visual style is unusually dramatic, probably the most dramatic and expressive in late modernism, it remains extremely minimalist rather than theatrical, which it tended to be in his early period. Unlike other modernist auteurs, he never ceases to use expressionist lighting effects and an extremely dramatic acting style throughout his modern period.

It is in *Rite* that one can observe the tight links between his minimalism and his conception of theater. His style is so austere in this film that it almost lacks mise-en-scène. The film is entirely shot in close-ups and medium close-ups of scenes involving mostly two, sometimes three, and on two occasions four, characters. In each scene we see the characters seated before some neutral background with virtually no props around and with no visual indications of where the scene takes place. The characters move or make gestures only on the occasion of their rare passionate outbursts; otherwise they remain seated. Locations are specified solely by intertitles like "In an office," "In a bar," or "In a hotel room," and only the shape of a table or chair indicates the nature of the location. The film has a strong theatrical effect stemming from the fact that the whole drama happens through dialogues; however, the fact that the characters hardly move around in the spaces shown, or in any surrounding space, creates a different kind of abstraction from that of modern theater. The "talking head" style and the realist and expressive acting style of *Rite* bring it close to the style of television drama rather than to theater.

Fig. 29. Theatrical setting: *Rite* (Ingmar Bergman, 1969).

Like Antonioni, Ingmar Bergman was one of the modern era's emblematic creators of bare landscapes. While this was one of the most important characteristics of Antonioni's style right from the beginning, in Bergman's career it appears quite late. In the early 1960s we find in fact a radical shift in Bergman's style in this respect. All of his celebrated masterpieces of the late 1950s (*The Seventh Seal*, 1956; *Wild Strawberries*, 1957; or *The Virgin Spring*, 1959) are set in a natural environment. The nature Bergman represents in these films is rich, fertile, and full of interesting creatures, secrets, and mysticism. All of these films in fact tell fairy tale-like stories in which the world of nature is full of signs for the characters suggesting to them what to do, what to think, and where to go in their lives. Therefore, there is a constant interaction and communication between the characters and the natural surroundings. It is a spiritual world that hides the information and the strength the characters need to shift their lives in the right direction, while on their sides they have the moral attitude that makes them capable of this shift. In *The Seventh Seal* a variety of imagined and real mysterious creatures populate the world the heroes are going through; in *Wild Strawberries* the childhood memories are hidden in the bushes and behind the trees, and in *The Virgin Spring* it is God who manifests himself in nature. More than Rossellini, Bergman adopts a genuinely romantic approach to nature. As we will see below, Tarkovsky will continue this romantic approach to natural environment.

Bergman's representation of nature suddenly changes in *Through a Glass Darkly:* we find ourselves on a desolate island with bare rocks, empty seashore, and a shipwreck. This kind of landscape appears briefly already in the beginning of *The Seventh Seal*, where there is a sharp distinction between different landscapes associated with different characters: the romantic landscape is associated with Jof and Mia, and the desolate environment is

Fig. 30. "Warm" natural environment: *Wild Strawberries* (Ingmar Bergman, 1957).

associated with the Knight. And this is the kind of environment that will characterize his films between 1961 and 1970, when nature is represented. He returns to the representation of a "friendly nature" with *Cries and Whispers* (1972), where the few comforting scenes all take place in the beautiful garden while the rest of the story takes place in the house interior. The relationship between his characters and their environment is very different, however, from what we find in the films of Antonioni or even Rossellini. While Rossellini creates dramatic contrast between nature and his characters, Antonioni represents indifference and detachment between characters and surrounding. In Bergman's case we can speak of real expressiveness or symbolism in this context. The drama is not between the characters and the environment as in Rossellini; the environment visually contains or represents the drama emerging between the characters.

In fact Bergman does not pay too much attention to his landscapes in his modern period. These films are mostly set in interiors, shot in close-ups or medium close-ups, so the environment is not particularly prevalent in the story, unlike in the Antonioni films whose typical shot length is long shot or medium long shot with relatively few close-ups. But every time nature or some object of the environment is given significance in a modern Bergman film, it immediately becomes expressive and symbolic.

Bergman's "modern" landscapes are not as diverse as Antonioni's. The reason for this is that the psychological states the landscape is meant to express, in his films from *Through the Glass Darkly* (1961) to *The Passion of Anna* (1969) at least, is always that of intense suffering from a mental or physical illness or abandonment. If we said that Antonioni characterizes each of his landscapes by a few elements, it is true for Bergman too, only these few elements remain the same throughout his films: lonely trees, bare rocks, empty meadows, and seashore. In *Through a Glass Darkly,* the first film of

Fig. 31. "Cold" natural environment: *Hour of the Wolf* (Ingmar Bergman, 1968).

his modernist period, he still uses a rather "romantic" symbol, a shipwreck where Karin hides and which obviously symbolizes her fears, illness, and loneliness. In later films, such artificial constructions simply disappear, and what remains is the same bare landscape over and over again symbolizing psychological suffering. In the modern Bergman films a desolate environment is truly a projection of the characters' state of mind, and as these states are always almost the same their visual projection remains the same as well. This is why, beginning with *Through a Glass Darkly* , Bergman shoots most of his most important modern films at the same location: the island of Fårö.

The expressiveness of the setting of his films becomes apparent also from another aspect. It becomes increasingly difficult for the viewer to distinguish between what is outside and what is inside the characters' mind. In *Through a Glass Darkly* it is true only for the ill character. But this becomes very apparent in later films, such as *Silence*, where the outside world is quite unreal; and in *Persona*, where the film culminates with the inner and outer worlds melting into each other, and especially in *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), a film full of hallucinations impossible to distinguish from reality. While Antonioni's sets consist of a variety of disconnected and antidramatic spaces full of emptiness, Bergman's sets are uniform empty spaces but filled with tension and drama.

With his peculiar style Bergman is one of the most stand-alone figures in modernism. We can find the influence of Bergman's expressive minimalism here and there in small segments of films especially in Eastern European modern films, such as the opening sequence of Kira Muratova's *Short Encounters* (1967) and Jerzy Skolimowski's *Barrier* (1966). Godard admitted that his *A Married Woman* (1964) was influenced by Bergman's works.[15] Even though his modern films were highly characteristic and consistent in their styles,

15. Godard, *Introduction a une véritable histoire du cinéma*, 102.

Fig. 32. Nature and suffering: *Hour of the Wolf* (Ingmar Bergman, 1968).

they were not imitated nor continued by followers consistently. To give an explanation of this phenomenon we should probably first look for historical reasons rather than stylistic ones. Bergman comes out of a genuinely Nordic theatrical tradition that goes back to the first decade of the twentieth century with Mauritz Stiller, but most importantly to Alf Sjöberg and Victor Sjöström. Bergman's minimalist style follows another Nordic early modernist director's style, that of Carl Theodor Dreyer. Bergman is firmly rooted in this Nordic film tradition. which itself might be an explanation why other directors from other parts of the world were not particularly receptive to this style.

As regards young Swedish directors emerging during the 1960s, they were eager to find their own way, which would make their styles distinguishable from their master's. Rather than being a model, Bergman was a figure who cast a heavy shadow.[16] Young French or Italian directors had at least two or three models to follow in their own national cinemas, but Swedes had only one who alone represented Swedish cinema for the rest of the world already in the early 1960s. It is quite understandable that they instead looked for models that could liberate them from the influence of this tradition, which they found in modern French cinema, especially in Godard.

Finally, the uniqueness of the Bergman form also has a stylistic explanation. As we said earlier, modern Bergman films are made of two typical prevailing elements: the close-up of the character's facial expression and a

16. In an interview in 1969 Bergman appears very aware of this: "In spite of your tremendous hegemony over the Swedish cinema, which has lasted for so many years, very very few of the so-called Swedish new wave—if you'll allow the expression—can be regarded as Bergman disciples." Bergman answers: "None at all." In *Bergman on Bergman*, interviews by Stig Björkman, Torste Manns, and Jonas Sima (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 250.

Fig. 33. The two faces: Liv Ulmann and Bibi Andersson in *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1966).

particular landscape. We can find no other minimalist style that is so much rooted in characteristic elements that are expressive in the same manner. Antonioni varies the environment in each of his films, and the modernist characteristics prevail in the way he represents these environments. Inexpressive acting style ensures that he (and anyone else following his style) may use a variety of actors to play in the highly undramatic stories that do not need characteristic acting. Antonioni's style is not dependent on actors nor on specific environments in spite of the recurrent actors he may use. Likewise, Bresson's style is based on withdrawing and hiding expressive elements, which makes possible a variety of usages of his style. By contrast, Bergman's modern films are based on concise and tense dramas placed in specific environments and expressed by specific faces. That is why we find in the great majority of his modern films the same actors and the same setting. Bergman's style is closely associated with the faces of Harriet Andersson, Ingrid Thulin, Erland Josephson, Max von Sydow, Bibi Andersson, Liv Ulmann, and Gunnar Björnstrand. Bergman recounts that the inspiration for *Persona* came to him when he noticed the similarities between the faces of Liv Ulmann and Bibi Andersson.[17]

17. *Bergman on Bergman*, 196.

:8:

Naturalist Styles

The appearance of a certain naturalism in film style was the most general phenomenon characterizing the transition to modern art cinema from the classical expressive style that dominated the 1940s and much of the 1950s. Most of the European "new cinemas" debuted to some extent with a return to the representation of real-life experience even if stylistically this did not mesh well with stylistic changes, like in the case of new British cinema at least until 1962. While the emergence of "new cinemas" can definitely be associated with a more realistic film form, modernism proper is not to be identified with this realism. Realism had a particular modernist form of its own.

Under this heading I will gather films using the style in which documentary, or to use the French terminology, *cinéma vérité* (direct cinema), is predominant. I prefer to use the term "naturalist" rather than "documentary" as it is more evocative of a style than a genre, and because I want to avoid discussing the problem of documentary and fiction. Naturalist film style reminds the viewer of real-life experiences, either by the characters' natural way of acting and talking or by giving the image the style of a documentary or newsreel (e.g., shaky handheld camera movements, wide-angle lenses, random panning around as if looking for a subject, characters communicating directly with the camera).

In modern cinema there were two sources of the naturalist style: socially committed neorealism and ethnographic documentary. The influences of the two sources followed a parallel development only in the first period of modern cinema. Italian modern directors of the early 1960s such as Olmi, Rosi, Bertolucci, and Pasolini started out of their own national heritage of naturalist style, socially committed neorealism. In Czechoslovakia Milos

Forman, Ivan Passer, and Vera Chytilová also constructed their satirical style on neorealism. In other parts of Europe the self-reflective version of naturalist style, cinéma vérité, was dominant. This influence was mediated mainly by the films of Godard. who first realized the advantages of cinéma vérité in its associative self-reflexive narrative commentary with improvised filming style.

Post-neorealism

I will discuss the emergence of post-neorealism more in detail in the historical section below. Here I will treat only its main formal characteristics. One of them is an increased focus on individual personality and on the psychological factors of the characters' acts. The consequence of this was that post-neorealist films work most often with professional actors rather than with amateurs, like early neorealism. The most typical examples are Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960) with Alain Delon or Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* (1962), which was a kind of tribute to star Anna Magnani. Even in Pasolini's first film, *Accattone!* (1961), the most reminiscent of early neorealism especially in its extensive use of nonprofessional actors, one can observe in the emphasis on the emotional aspect of Franco Citti's character a considerable difference from neorealism. The constant biblical allusions emphasized by some painterly compositions and the music also point toward Pasolini's later modernist ornamental style.

The other formal aspect of post-neorealism is the use of some modernist narrative techniques. Together with neorealist style, Bertolucci's first film, *The Grim Reaper,* uses parallel narratives, while Olmi's second film, *The Fiancés,* employs a memory flashback technique. This kind of slightly "modernized" post-neorealism had an impact on the Czechoslovak new wave. In the neorealist tradition based on traditional narrative forms of adventure and melodrama, the author's subjectivity could manifest itself only in an indirect way. For an ironic or satirical approach where the author's subjectivity is expressed in an undercover manner, the neorealist form is more appropriate, which is why the "Forman school" of the Czechoslovak new wave related to neorealism rather than to cinéma vérité. The reason for the success of the neorealist form in the former socialist countries is that it would have been more difficult for political criticism to circumvent political censorship in a cinéma vérité form. Neorealist form is an apparently "objective" approach to social problems, whereas cinéma vérité offers a subjective and individualistic commentary on them. That is why in Hungary following the hardening of communist political power in the seventies, the neorealist style re-

appeared as a disguised form of political criticism, while in Czechoslovakia after 1968 even this form of criticism disappeared completely.

Cinéma Vérité

Right from the beginning, Godard's style was strongly influenced by Jean Rouch's self-reflective direct style. The fact that visual segments of real life, or at least those looking real, can be loosely put side by side and organized by a subjective voice-over or onscreen narrative attracted Godard to a great extent, and of his pre-1964 films contain sequences of cinéma vérité mise-en-scène. Between 1965 and 1967 some of his films are already spectacularly artificial, like *Contempt* (1963), *Pierrot le fou* (1965), and *Alphaville* (1965), while on the other hand some are like pure cinéma vérité documentaries, such as *Masculine-Feminine* (1966) and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1966). After 1967, classical cinéma vérité style disappears from his films.

Godard admired cinéma vérité for the same reason that other young filmmakers admired Godard's use of cinéma vérité style: not for representing "reality" but for making it possible to express subjective views through images that give the impression of a direct relationship with reality. Godard said, referring to the difference between him and real cinéma vérité filmmakers such as Flaherty and Rouch, "They take the characters from reality and make a fictional story with them. It is somewhat like what I do, but just in the opposite way: I took fictional characters, and I made a story with them that in a way looked like a documentary."[1] The result was still accepted as a direct manifestation of some kind of "reality," but a philosophically and conceptually informed reality rather than a socially defined one. That is why the essay genre in most cases uses the naturalist style. Clear cases are Godard's own *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, Kluge's *Yesterday Girl*, and Sjöman's *I Am Curious* (Yellow). Even in the Soviet Union, where the loosely constructed documentary style (together with other forms of modernism) was not welcomed by authorities even into the 1960s, the naturalist style essay could find its way in some cases, such as Vasili Shukshin's *Happy Go Lucky* (1972).

The naturalist style reached the height of its popularity at the turn of the sixties and seventies, and in some cases, such as in Hungary, this trend lasted even into the early 1980s. But cinéma vérité rather than neorealism was at the root of the trend of direct cinema. The reason for the success

1. François Truffaut cited in Claire Clouzot, *La novelle vague 25 ans après* (Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1983), 179.

of cinéma vérité in modernism, and the reason why post-neorealism and the neorealist tradition finally vanished from modern cinema in Europe (while in America John Cassavetes used this form well into the seventies and eighties), can be found in the difference of their concentration. Neorealism is a style foregrounding a social environment. Cinéma vérité is a form that concentrates on individual subjectivity as reflecting on a particular environment. The fundamental assumption of the neorealist form is that the events taking place in the foreground are but an example of the social rules and mechanisms determining the background world. The limits of individualization of the characters in neorealism are always determined by the character's social place. This is true even in the post-neorealist version, where directors tried to concentrate more on the characters' individual personality. In this respect Fellini could be considered as a post-neorealist director up until *La dolce vita*. However interesting or extravagant these characters may be, they are always an example of their social type. The shift between neorealism (or post-neorealism) and modernism comes when the character no longer represents a social environment, but on the contrary, she becomes completely alienated from any environment. It is not simply the personalized or psychological description of the character that makes this shift. It is rather with the split between the character and her social or historical background that modernism starts.

In cinéma vérité this split is included in the form. The commentaries and reflections of the characters necessarily distance them from their concrete situations. Cinéma vérité originated from a fundamentally anthropological approach, which focused on the mental universe of the film's subject. Even though its strict form repressed the author's subjectivity (which was the foundation of Rossellini's criticism of Jean Rouch), still its form could be more personal and subjective than neorealism. The contexts of cinema vérité stories were an individual's communicative relationship with his or her environment, in which the consciousness of the filmed situation was included. This resulted in cinéma vérité characters being considered primarily as unique individuals rather than as social types, and secondly in a constant interaction between the characters and the author. In cinéma vérité constant communication between the author and the subject made the author's presence a central element of the film, and in this regard cinéma vérité was a genuinely modernist invention. For directors who wanted and were free to express themselves more overtly and who wanted to foreground their own role in the formation of the film, the cinema vérité style became an adequate vehicle. Cinéma vérité style's popularity is also due to the fact that it could be used also as a partial solution or as one isolated element

in the film. Thus even Bergman could use it in his *Passion of Anna,* where interviews with the actors interrupt from time to time the flow of narrative fiction. And obviously, this particularity is most useful in the essay genre, where different stylistic and narrative fragments are put side by side in an often loosely structured manner.

The "New Wave" Style

"The young filmmakers will express themselves in the first person and will tell us all that happened to them: it can be the story of their first love or their last, the rise of their political consciousness, a story of a travel, of an illness, their military service, their marriage, their vacation, and we will necessarily like it, because it will be true and new. . . . The film of tomorrow will resemble the person who made it." Truffaut wrote this in an article, "The Film of Tomorrow Will Be Made by Adventurers."[2] The idea of the film as personal self-expression or personal diary is the lowest common denominator of the French new wave. However, this is not only a general idea of the "film d'auteur," but it also had serious consequences regarding the film form. Interestingly, in spite of the fact that it was Truffaut who formulated and advertised most intensively the idea of personal filmmaking, it was Godard rather than Truffaut who developed a form, which became influential as the "new wave style." Truffaut as a filmmaker was nowhere as radical as a film critic in opposing the classical form. The quality of a "personal self-expression" characterized his films only at the beginning, and especially in the *The 400 Blows,* rather than throughout his filmmaking career. Although he was still using some of the new wave gimmicks toward the end of the 1960s—jump cuts, ironic narrative self-reflection, fast motion—his narrative and visual style became more and more conservative even after his first couple films. Yet this relative conservatism or moderate modernism, coupled with some ironic and playful elements, could become quite attractive to important filmmakers with similar inclinations and talents, such as Richardson (*The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, Tom Jones*) or Szabó (*The Age of Daydreaming*, 1964; *Father*, 1966; *A Film about Love*, 1970).

Godard by contrast created from the general "new wave style" a particular coherent form that became especially influential in the late sixties and early seventies: the cinema vérité-style essay. This form became extremely attractive for many young European filmmakers. The first follower of this form was Bertolucci (*Before the Revolution*), then came Straub (*Not Reconciled,*

2. Cited by Antoine de Baecque, *La nouvelle vague* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 89.

Fig. 34. At the release of *Breathless*: producer Georges de Beauregard, director Jean-Luc Godard, and actor Jean-Paul Belmondo.

1965), Sjöman (*491*, 1964), Kluge (*Yesterday Girl*), Ulrich Schamoni (*It*, 1966), and Alain Tanner (*Charles, Dead or Alive*, 1969). The main characteristics of this form are the extreme fragmentation of the narrative, predominant verbal commentaries, on-location shooting at mostly unspecified urban scenes, in most cases self-conscious reflection on the filmmaking process,

nondramatic action mainly consisting of verbal exchanges, and documentary-style camerawork.

Not all Godard films in his first period were made in this form, and he stopped using it after 1967 when political activism made his films even more self-conscious and theatrical.

:9:
Ornamental Styles

The ornamental trend is a peculiar phenomenon of late modern cinema. Although traces of it appeared already at the emergence of modernism, it was characteristic of the second period starting from the late 1960s.

Modern ornamentalism is not mere decoration or spectacular effect. Ornamental films may have theater as a cultural referential background, but most typically, their source is somewhere else. The source of modern ornamental style is either in different national folklore or in a religious or mythological context.[1] Thus I will distinguish between two trends of modern ornamental forms: *folkloric* and *mythological* ornamentalism.

Ornamental style in itself is not alien to modern art. The Viennese Secession and art nouveau are the most salient examples of modern ornamental styles in the early modern period. Ornamentalism can be a form of abstraction whenever a closed set of regular or irregular geometrical elements that are not meant to represent a part of surface reality becomes an essential part of the composition. However, ornamental elements in modern art are meant to convey some deeper meaning; they are meant to represent some kind of "inner reality" and express fantasy, emotions, or a psychological state of mind allegedly inexpressible by elements of surface reality. Often times, modern ornamentalism mixes elements of realist surface representation with abstract ornamental elements, like in the works of one of the greatest Viennese masters, Gustav Klimt. In other cases ornamental modernism remains entirely abstract, like in case of Vasili Kandinsky or the American

1. The term "ornamental film" was first used by Ákos Szilágyi to characterize the aesthetic form of the films of Sergei Paradzhanov. In *Filmvilág* (1987–88): 34–39.

abstract expressionists. Ornamental art is abstract, but modern ornamentalism is always based on the idea that the abstract patterns express some fundamental mental order of human nature.

This is why generally ornamentalism uses national or international folklore as a source for its motifs, often apostrophized as "primitive art." Modern ornamentalism is closely associated with modernism's fundamental project of reaching back to the most basic, original elements of artistic expression. The reason for this attachment is modernism's assiduity to go beyond casual disorder of everyday reality and to find underlying general and elementary patterns that are supposed to govern our lives and that are rendered invisible by more complicated cultural structures. Art that is considered "primitive" or "ancient" is thus considered to be closer to these elementary patterns. Whether these patterns and laws are spiritual or psychic, emotional or conceptual, mathematical or physical, religious or historical, the modernist project is to find them and make them the basis of aesthetic representation.

The cult of primitivism in modern art and modern thought is part of the quest for authentic, elementary mental and aesthetic forms that are uncorrupted by civilization. This cult stems from the idea that in abstract patterns one finds the common cultural roots of humankind. Adoption of the simplest, mainly geometric, ornamental patterns of primitive and ancient art (especially from Africa and the Far East), considered as genuine and elementary expressions of "the" human mentality, is a logical consequence of this project. To found a modern art rooted in the ancient spirit of one's own national culture is also an attempt to reach back to uncorrupted original mental patterns as exemplified by the music of Béla Bartók.

Modern ornamentalism is also related to the modernist critique of classical aesthetics. Frances S. Connelly argues that the cult of "irrational" primitivism and ornamental style in modernism emerged as a consequence of a revolt against a focus on rationalism of classicism.

> The grotesque and the ornamental were among those elements of physicality and disorder allowed to exist on the edges if controlled by centrifugal force of the center. They were the marginalia to the rational text, the darkness that fell just outside the aureole of the light of reason, the bestial, lusty satyr that by contrast heightened the proportioned beauty and sober intellect of Apollo.[2]

Modern artists consciously turned against the rational order of classical representation, which dictated rules that were thought to block instinctive

2. Frances S. Connelly, *The Sleep of Reason: Primitivism in Modern European Art and Aesthetics, 1725–1907* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 13.

imagination. Primitive art and ornamentalism served for modernists as the powerful expressions of genuine artistic instinct repressed by the rules of classical art.

The ornamental trend of modern art has also an intrinsic logic in its own development. Roland Barthes, in his essay "Mythologies,"[3] concludes that modern art, which is fundamentally alienating and demythologizing, necessarily has to arrive at a certain mythological and ornamental discourse. Furthermore, in a footnote he links this modern mythological approach to free indirect speech, which, many years later, will become Pasolini's basic theoretical issue as the fundamental form of modern cinema. According to Barthes, modern art is characterized by the demystification and subversion of traditional art forms. However, all attempts to dissipate myths will become in their turn a myth right away, so the only way to go beyond myths is to create "artificial" or "experimental" myths, myths of "second degree." In Barthes's account this is what Flaubert had done in his novel *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, where he mythicizes the already mythical discourse of the two main characters and constructs what Barthes calls the "bouvard-and-pécuchet-ism" as a particular way of behaving and thinking. Through the ornamental excess of the artificial myth construction this results in the demythization of the mythical discourse:

> Flaubert in fact archeologically reconstructed a mythical discourse: this is Viollet-le-Duc of a certain bourgeois ideology. But, in a less naïve way than Viollet-le-Duc, he placed further ornaments in this reconstruction, which demythicize this ideology; these ornaments (the forms of the second-degree myth) are like the subjunctive.

And the footnote to this is as follows: "Subjunctive, because Latin puts indirect style or indirect discourse in this form, which is an admirable means of demystification."[4] According to Barthes the modernist demythicizing discourse critique can only be effective through a personal "second-degree" mythical form, where the author can unfold his criticism with the help of the excess of ornaments. A direct criticism would immediately be

3. Barthes, "Mythologies," in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993). In my view, Barthes uses the category of the myth in an excessively restricted sense, detached from its traditional meanings, with a pejorative overtone, and with a weakly disguised touch of left-wing critical bias. This would not be a major problem if he had not claimed the "only" correct definition of myth. He writes self-confidently: "A thousand different definitions of the myth will be opposed to mine. However, I wanted to define things not just words."

4. Roland Barthes, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), 1: 703.

transformed into another "naïve" artistic myth. This creates a particular indirect discourse, which is the author's own, and which will keep a distance from the myth it refers to through ornamental intensification. Thus modern ornamental form can be interpreted as an indirect discourse that, through intensification, results in an ironic outsider's position, which is the source of its demythicizing power. Barthes's remark can be perfectly illustrated by Pasolini's mythical-ornamental films and by his theory concerning "free indirect style" as the fundamental discourse of modern cinema. Furthermore, without ever referring to it, Barthes comes to understand quite well the logic of pop art emerging at that time, which can be also viewed as the perversion of the modernist criticism of myths through the intensification of the mythical character of everyday banality.

It seems quite natural that wherever ornamental style appears in modern cinema, it is associated either with some folklore or with reconstructed ancient/primitive cultures and mythology. The first type is represented by Marcel Camus, Paradzhanov, Jancsó, some of the modern Fellini films, and Tarkovsky; the second type is represented by the late period of Pasolini and Fellini's *Satyricon*, *Fellini's Roma*, and *Fellini's Casanova*.[5]

For obvious reasons, ornamentalism almost never mixes with naturalist style. In some rare cases, however, rather interesting mixtures can be found. At the At the turn of the 1950s–1960s, when the first traces of modern ornamental style appeared, Marcel Camus's *Black Orpheus* (1959) can be considered as the first clear appearance of this stylistic conception. In some parts of this film there is documentary footages of the Rio Carnaval—itself an ornamental folkloric ritual, while other parts are pure fiction based on folkloric rituals. Another film form the same year where some effects of ornamentalism stems from the carnivalesque character of the film is Fellini's *La dolce vita*, which is his first film where his later highly ornamental taste is clearly manifested for the first time. *La dolce vita* is midway between Fellini's post-neorealist and modernist periods, which makes this film also a rare example of some moderate degree of ornamentalism found together with neorealist naturalist style.

The modern author who initiated the mythological form of ornamentalism and in whose films one can find an ornamental style mixed with elements of naturalist style is Pasolini. Especially in his mythological films

5. Interestingly, in a documentary made in the seventies, commenting on his own style, Paradzhanov names Fellini and especially Pasolini as his models, although he was one of the first and most powerful representatives of the ornamental conception—together with Fellini and even before Pasolini would turn into this direction. Clearly, this reference to well-known Western authors was due to the fact that Paradzhanov was not only isolated, but was even persecuted in the Soviet Union.

Fig. 35. Ornamental mask: *Satyricon* (Federico Fellini, 1969).

Medea and *Oedipus Rex* his usual handheld camera style, his seemingly haphazard camera movements, panning the crowd, as if looking for a topic, some of his camera angles, sometimes up against the sun so that nothing can be seen for seconds, his long sequences about the sacrificial rites, or that of the Delphi scene, give the impression of fictional documentary about a nonexistent mythological reality.

For obvious reasons ornamentalism mingles very seldom with minimalism. The most important exception is Jancsó, as well as some of

Figs. 36–38. Ornamental style: *The Color of Pomegranates* (Sergei Paradzhanov, 1968).

Angelopoulos's films that are Jancsó-like, such as *The Traveling Players* (1975). However, even in Jancsó's career one finds an uneven bias either on one side or the other. Some of his films, such as *The Round-Up*, *The Red and the White*, and *Silence and Cry* (1967), create a stylistic atmosphere that is more minimalist than ornamental. In others, such as *Agnus Dei* (1970), *The Confrontation*(1969), *Private Vices, Public Pleasures* (1975), or *Elektra, My Love* (1974), Jancsó emphasizes rather the ornamental aspect of his style. The stylistic balance in his films depends very much on the extent to which he uses folkloric, especially dance, motifs, on the complexity of the sets, which increases over the course of his career, on the number of characters he uses in individual scenes, which varies to a great extent, and on the complexity of the time-space relationship, which is probably the most complex in *Agnus Dei*.

In addition to the films of Jancsó and Angelopoulos, minimalism and the ornamental use of visual elements occur together in the early films of Philippe Garrel. These films of Garrel, especially *Le lit de la vierge* (1969), *The Inner Scar* (1972), and *Athanor* (1972), are reminiscent also of Jancsó's films: large indefinite empty spaces, excessively long takes, constant movement of the characters and the camera, and symbolic use of the objects and gestures. However, Garrel's films are more oneiric and are more theatrical and less action-oriented than those of Jancsó. As for their themes they are even

more different since they mainly concentrate on the personal interior realm rather than on exterior historical or social dynamics.

One can say with the utmost certainty that the ornamental trend was used more in some countries than in others. Ornamental styles are characteristic of some cultural regions. While all ornamental films refer to some traditional cultural background, some of them borrow motifs from a given cultural mythology more consistently than others. Ornamental-style films that refer to a folkloric or religious background were made most often in Eastern and Central Europe. One can even say that the main contribution of this region of Europe to the modernist movement was its incorporation of a variety of traditional cultural motifs into the modernist form: on the one hand a considerable enrichment of modern cinema's forms, and on the other hand a modernization of a cultural world still very much impregnated by mythologies of folklore. While modern cinema in France, Germany, and Sweden represented first of all the modernization of national and international traditions of art cinema, in the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, and in some cases Italy (especially through some films of Fellini, Pasolini, and the Taviani brothers) it represented also the modernization of a traditional national cultural environment through its integration into the modern cinematic universe. Traditionalism in this case means not mere representation of a folkloric environment, which obviously is not a modernist specificity. It means representation of traditional myths through their characteristics that are susceptible to some kind of modernist, abstract, subjective, self-conscious, or self-reflective stylization—in other words, elements that refer not to a relationship between myth and reality but to general cultural archetypes. The reflexive character of these modern folkloric films is manifested by the fact that they are not intended to represent folklore or traditional mythology as a real existing cultural universe. They represent it as a source of traditional values, behavioral patterns, in short, basic mental structures.

Most often, the elements of a national folklore that are emphasized refer to fantasy or to the unconscious. This is why oneiric and surrealistic motifs dominate in most of these films. In general terms, we can say that modern ornamental films represent the world of traditional mythologies as a hidden or unconscious mental structure underlying the cool, alienated, and technological surface of the modern world. In most cases, where a traditional cultural universe or a mythology is evoked, it is the antagonism or even the clash with the modern world that becomes the central element of the film.

Fellini's Roma is a particularly good example. His conception was to depict the life of modern Rome by constantly opposing it to the ancient cul-

ture of the place sunk to the "unconscious level" of the city.[6] While he shows modern life as soaked by the ancient spirit, Fellini tries to seize the moment when this spirit is on the verge of vanishing, which is symbolized by the scene where the discovered underground frescos disappear in the light cast on them. Here the modern tends to destroy the ancient, which constitutes its own cultural "unconscious." Civilization and barbarism change their meanings in the last scene where the group of motorcyclists, contradicting Fellini's commentary ("There is nobody around. A great silence. Only the water of the fountains") enter the scene making a lot of noise, killing the ancient-modern atmosphere, and expropriate the city for a new barbarian civilization.

Folklore and mythology for modern cinema is more an example of general human mental creativity than a set of ethnographic facts. For that reason, modern ornamental filmmakers most of the time do not feel it necessary to reconstruct traditional forms with ethnographic fidelity. In almost every case we find a stylistically concentrated or even distorted and intensified way of representing traditional folklore. One of the most spectacular examples is Iuri Ilyenko's *The Eve of Ivan Kupalo* (1968), adapted from Gogol's short story, which itself was a compilation of Ukrainian folk tales. Ilyenko transforms the folkloric motives into a highly surrealistic hypersaturated visual texture, where different visual and narrative motives of Ukrainian national folklore overshadow almost completely the linear narrative. The highly fragmented structure (442 shots in 68 minutes) gives this film the look of a series of ornamentally and sometimes surrealistically composed individual sequences.

The most typical elements of ornamental style include highly symbolic narrative and unnatural-looking visual compositions, clothing, and facial makeup. Artificial stylization is easier to notice when we have traditional mythologies not issued from popular folklore, like in Wajda's *The Wedding* or in Pasolini's *Oedipus Rex* and *Medea*. These films are based on literary material that became archetypal elements either of a national culture (in Wajda's

6. Walter C. Foreman compares Fellini's film with Virgil's *Aeneid*. He makes the interesting remark that both Fellini and Aeneas visit an underworld of Rome. While Aeneas "encounters people from his past who reveal to him the future of the city he is going to found in stone, Fellini in the underworld uses futuristic machines as a means of revealing the old Roman house, the past of the city he is founding in images. The Roman future shown to Aeneas by Anchises has in three thousand years become the Roman past seen by Fellini's Camera." Walter C. Foreman, "Fellini's Cinematic City: *Roma* and Myths of Foundation," in *Perspectives on Federico Fellini*, ed. Peter Bondanella and Cristina Degli-Esposti (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1993), 155.

Figs. 39–40. Folkloric ornamentalism: *The Eve of Ivan Kupalo* (Iuri Ilyenko, 1968).

case) or of European culture as a whole (in Pasolini's case). In Wajda's film the theme of a wedding at the turn of the nineteenth-twentieth century provides an opportunity to bring together a huge variety of different characters in different historical and folkloric costumes in one place where they become symbols of an entire historical society. This society is described as cohering around heroic dreams and fantasies and poetic myths about the past, all of which is challenged by the coming of the herald bringing the news about the war that calls the nation together into patriotic union. The ornamental intensification and the symbolic abstraction in the description of the characters and their relations are contrasted with the reality of the danger where all this mythology is supposed to prove its validity and reference to reality. In other words, the decorativeness of the historical and folkloric costumes is directly associated with a collective mentality. Quite similar is Wojciech Has's surrealistic mental journey film, *The Hour-Glass Sanatorium* (1973), only here the fantasy universe of the narrative is constructed of elements of predominantly Jewish traditional folklore in Poland of the beginning of the century in such a way as to suggest the perishing of the whole world.

Pasolini's mythological films reflect even more a purely mental reconstruction of a mythical universe rather than a historical and ethnographic reality. In *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (1964) Pasolini declared that he was not interested in reconstructing the historical reality of Christ and the story. He rather intended to construct his own sacred vision of it: "I want to re-consecrate things as much as possible, I want to re-mythicize them."[7]

7. Oswald Stack, *Pasolini on Pasolini* (London: Thames and Hudson; BFI, 1969), 25.

Fig. 41. Reconstructed barbarian mythology: *Oedipus Rex* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1967).

Fig. 42. Reconstructed barbarian mythology: *Medea* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1969).

It was even more so in his films where he used mythology as a narrative basis. All the settings and the costumes of both *Oedipus Rex* and *Medea* are pure inventions of Pasolini and of his costume designer. Both stories are located in a period about which our knowledge is more rooted in mythology than in historical fact. Pasolini wanted to reach the visual atmosphere of a "barbarian look" and at the same time give it a "documentary-looking" reality too. The characters' appearance is therefore an "ethnomythological" reflection of those psychic contents of which each of the stories became an archetypal narrative. Pasolini's reconstructions are not meant to be those of a historical or a mythological world but that of a basic psychic and emotional structure manifested in the myths of this period. In *Oedipus Rex* this is particularly clear, since Oedipus's original story is associated in the film with a twentieth-century framing story. Rather than modernizing the story, Pasolini wanted to evoke the original myth in the form of a fantasy having a strange, and in many ways frightening, savage atmosphere to refer to the basically barbaric psychic substructure of the contemporary modern world. The apparently ornamental, colorful aspect of the film has the function of representing an abstract structure, which, according to Pasolini, constitutes the psychological "deep structure" of all societies.

The same basic conception can be found in *Medea*, even though there is no such explicit allusion to actualizing the myth as in *Oedipus Rex*. However, here, too, the same two worlds are contrasted to one another in a metaphysical dualism. Medea's world is the ancient, barbaric world of cruel rituals dominated by the nonearthly universe of the gods; Jason, on the other hand, represents a pragmatic, enlightened world, without gods or metaphysics. Jason represents modernity, and Medea represents the world of barbaric, unconscious impulses—and Pasolini's thesis is that the two subsist side by side. There is no dialectical synthesis between modern and ancient, enlightened and barbaric. Both are present at the same time all the time. As the Centaur says in the film: "What is sacred is conserved in its new desacralized form. And here we are, one next to the other!" Pasolini represents two antagonistic worlds, which, in spite of the antagonism, constitute one and the same universe. Pasolini's approach is metaphysical rather than historical-dialectical. When reflecting on his own dualistic approach, he said: "My dialectics is no longer tertiary but binary."[8] He also had a plan to make another film about the coexistence of barbarism and modernism in a bipolar world, *Il padre selvaggio* (Father Savior), in which a young man leaves an African tribal world for modern capitalism. This dualistic metaphysical approach is a characteristic trait of a modernist author.

We find the same conception in Fellini's *Satyricon*, another highly ornamental Italian film of the period. Fellini's intentions, just like Pasolini's, were to create a parallel, dualistic vision of antiquity and the modern world. Fellini's reconstruction of Petronius's novel was neither an adaptation nor the reconstruction of the "original" world of Petronius. *Satyricon* presents an archetypal form of the moral corruption of the modern life. As Fellini comments:

> We can find disconcerting analogies between Roman society before the final arrival of Christianity—a cynical society, impassive, corrupt, and frenzied—and society today, more blurred in its external characteristics only because it is internally more confused. Then as now we find ourselves confronting a society at the height of its splendor but revealing already the signs of a progressive dissolution . . . a society in which all beliefs—religious, philosophical, ideological, and social—have crumbled, and been replaced by a sick, wild, and impotent eclecticism. . . . Thus the film will have to be made of unequal segments, with long luminous episodes joined by far-out,

8. Cited in Luigi Torraca, "Il Vento Di Medea," *Pasolini e L'Antico. I Doni Della Ragione*, ed. Umberto Todini (Naples: Edizione Scientifica Italiane, 1995), 90.

blurred sequences, fragmentary to the point of never being reconstructed again—the potsherds, crumbs, and dust of a vanished world.[9]

On these premises Fellini, just like Pasolini, feels free not to reconstruct the "original" self-contained world of antiquity but to construct his own visual and narrative mythology from the fragments originating from here and there, from antiquity, from modernity, history of art, and from his fantasy in order to make the everlasting metaphysical structure of decadence salient in the midst of this pile of cultural debris and mythical fragments. According to the apt remark of Bernard F. Dick, *Satyricon* "has a *mythos*, not merely a plot." Just like Pasolini, Fellini creates the myth of the demythologized world of modernity. However fragmented and eclectic the film's cultural references may be, everything comes together in Fellini's mythicizing vision about the contemporary world functioning according the same basic principles obeyed by cultures that went before it: "If the work of Petronius is the realistic, bloody, and amusing description of the customs, characters, and general feel of those times, the film we want to freely adapt from it could be a fresco in fantasy key, a powerful and evocative allegory—a satire of the world we live in today. Man never changes."[10] Mythical ornamentalism for Fellini is a way of conceptualizing in an allegorical way the actual reality around him. The barbaric, mythical universe is another invisible or unconscious layer of the same world we now call modern and the surface of which looks empty and desolate. Returning to the discussion above about the concept of nothingness in modern cinema, we can now say that in the depth of the stylistic difference between modern minimalism and modern ornamentalism resides two opposing approaches to the same modern world: one representing the empty surface in the form of the absence or lack of the world of substantial values, the other reconstructing the realm of these missing values in the form of a mythical reality.

Within the modern ornamental trend Tarkovsky takes the reality of this reconstruction the most seriously. The reason for this is that the material and sensible presence of the spiritual world is contained in the mythical tradition itself that Tarkovsky is relying upon. Unlike Fellini and Pasolini, Tarkovsky does not have to dig into the depth of modern culture to find the mythical roots of the contemporary world. He has only to refer to

9. Federico Fellini quoted in "Preface to *Satyricon*," in *Federico Fellini: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Peter Bondanella (New York: Oxford, 1978), 16–18.

10. "Preface to *Satyricon*," p. 17.

his Russian Orthodox Christian tradition to evoke the dual vision of the world: simultaneously material and spiritual. I have already remarked that Tarkovsky's dualistic representation of the world can be detected in all of his films. This dualism is clearly manifested in terms of cinematic tools. In all of his films there is a serial structure parallel to the narrative one, consisting of recurring visual motifs, such as the rain or the horse in *Andrei Rublev,* the wind in *Mirror,* and different fluid elements and images of nature in all of his films.[11] In most cases the appearance of a particular element of these series of visual motifs is independent of any narrative function. Either they appear already as independent symbolic motifs, like the motif of the horse that appears in *Rublev* as a metaphor right from the beginning, or gain their narrative independence step by step as they reoccur. Such is the rain in *Rublev,* which appears for the first time as a narrative motivation for the monks to seek shelter in a barn where the jongleur is performing. Later on, when rain starts in a given scene there is no such narrative motivation. It becomes a visual element that directly links the scenes in which it occurs to a transcendental divine universe. We cannot call these elements "symbols" or "metaphors," as they do not have any precise conceptual meaning. They are the "manifestations" of this divine universe more than anything else, not subordinated to the logic of the narrative universe.

Although the referent of Tarkovsky's dual vision is in most cases the spiritual-material dichotomy, in some of his films this dichotomy refers to the modern-traditional contrast as well. This is clear in particular in *Solaris* where traditional values of culture and human relationships are opposed to modern technical civilization; in *Mirror,* where values of a traditional, spiritual, and national community are opposed to the present situation of the communication gap between generations; and in *Nostalghia,* where the old Russian world is opposed to the modern Western cultural environment. The "other world" that represents spiritual values is, so to speak, unnarrated in these films, it does not have stories, only an eternal presence that manifests itself from time to time through images of nature and different objects representing beauty, culture, and tenderness. Just like in the relevant films of Fellini and Pasolini, Tarkovsky's use of mythical cultural background serves primarily to create a holistic vision of the world, which contains the con-

11. A detailed discussion of Tarkovsky's recurrent motives and relationship with the Russian Orthodox tradition can be found in András Bálint Kovács and Ákos Szilágyi: *Les mondes d'Andreï Tarkovski* (Lausanne: L'Âge d'Homme, 1987).

trast between the traditional and spiritual on the one hand, and the modern and the material on the other.

It is that contrast that is missing from the modern cinema of Western and northern Europe, as well as from films of other Italian modern filmmakers such as Antonioni and Bertolucci. Still, any generalization claiming that ornamental style was the main characteristic of Eastern European cinema would be hasty and difficult to maintain. We cannot even say that the basic problematic underlying this style—the clash between traditional mythology and modernity—would be the most important concern of the cinema of this region. There is very little trace of this concern, for example, in the Czechoslovak new wave, and ornamental style is not particularly characteristic of Czechoslovak films either. In Poland only a few films by Wajda and Has raise this concern, and even though it is an important topic in Hungarian modern cinema, it is by no means the most important one. Analysis of problems of national history was a much more fundamental concern throughout Eastern European cinema. What we can assert with certainty, however, is that the most important accomplishments of cinematic ornamentalism in modern European cinema were made in Italy and Eastern Europe and that this style is much weaker in other parts of Europe. Films of Daniel Schmid in Switzerland or Hans-Jürgen Syberberg in Germany got very close to mythical ornamentalism, but none constructed a whole mythological universe, remaining rather on the theatrical side.

One of the possible reasons for this can be found in the status of modernization of the societies in these countries. Modernization in Eastern and Southern Europe was far less developed in this period than in the northwestern part of Europe. The fundamental experience was not the "modern condition" but the *transition* to the modern condition and the dissolution of traditional ways of life. As Italian film director Vittorio de Seta put it:

> Life changed, and with it the quality of life, as if orders had been handed down. Although invisible and unexpressed, they acted like commands that had only to be pronounced for the old models and values, especially those of rural life, to become obsolete and discarded. It was this period of the late fifties and early sixties for which *La Dolce Vita* served as a sort of watershed. . . . Urbanism, industrialism, consumerism, prosperity—this entire human transformation occurred—and was experienced—like a *natural disaster.*[12]

But the cultural experience that followed was not simply that of the collapse of a traditional cultural universe. Rather, traditional cultural patterns were considered more as a constitutive part of everyday life than in

12. Vittorio de Seta cited in Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano dal 1945 agli ottanta*, 631.

the more modernized societies of the West. Traditional cultural forms were not considered as anachronistic within modernized society rather as a fertile ground for it, a source for a special way of modernization. On the one hand modern filmmakers of this region were looking for ways to reconcile traditional and modern; on the other hand, where the contrast between traditional and modern was represented as antagonistic, it was the modern rather than the traditional that was held responsible for the conflict (*Roma*, *Solaris*, *The Mirror*). By contrast, in modern cinema of the West, if traditional ways of life were represented at all, they appeared as a retrograde and oppressive obstacle standing in the way of modernization, as we can see in Peter Fleischmann's *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* (1968). Obviously, this approach gives no reason for modern filmmakers to use elements of national folklore and mythology upon which to create a modern film form. By contrast this explains why the young Angelopoulos in Greece found Jancsó's ornamental version of the Antonioni form more appropriate to follow rather than other basic modernist forms.

Modern ornamentalism, however, is not missing entirely from the cinema of Western Europe either. It was present much earlier, during the first modern period. German expressionism was not only the adaptation of art cinema to the forms of modern expressionist painting and theater but also the cinematic adaptation of certain myths of German national culture. Expressionism was the most decorative of the modern styles in the cinema, and it became the means of processing the psychic effects of modernization in terms of this mythology. Even if one has some reservations with regard to Siegfried Kracauer's interpretation of German expressionism as the foreshadowing of Nazi power in the German social psyche, it is difficult to contest that these stories express some irrational fear or unconscious angst provoked by a social reality represented as extremely precarious and full of unpredictable and irrational threats.[13] The source of the danger in German expressionism can be both neurosis caused by anxiety of modern alienation (*From Morning till Midnight*, 1920; *Scherben*, 1921), and traditional mythical universe (*Nosferatu*, 1922). Ornamental and theatrical stylization was more intimately entwined in German expressionism than in late modernism, for the source of both was the same traditional mythological universe.

Likewise, but in a less radical manner, in early modern French cinema one can also find ornamental use of national folklore as the basis of modern-

13. See Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).

ist visual effects. One may think of Jean Epstein's *The Faithful Heart* (1923) and *Finis terrae* (1929), or Jean Grémillon's *Maldone* (1928; especially the farandole scene). It seems that the formalism of primitive myths and folkloric ornamental patterns sooner or later serve as an important source of inspiration for most (even if not in all) national cinemas where modernism became an important movement.[14]

14. The same is true for most phenomena of modern cinema of Asia and the Americas. A noncompetent viewer (or to use Nöel Burch's term, "a distant observer") of Japanese, Indian, or Brazilian films, however, must be very cautious in judging the extent to which these films are or are not based on folkloric ornamental art, since many things may appear as "folkloric" to a Western eye that in fact has been a banal part of everyday life in these countries. The situation is less difficult when we have to deal with clearly mythical stories and characters like in the films of Glauber Rocha in Brazil or in Kaneto Shindo's *Onibaba* (1964) in Japan, or when the film's plot explicitly refers to the contrast between modern and traditional cultural forms, like in Satyajit Ray's *Music Room* (although it is questionable to what extent this film is part of the modernist movement.) Since the decline of modernism the folkloric version of modern ornamentalism reemerged only in Iranian cinema of the 1990s in some films of Abbas Kiarostami (especially in *Where Is the Friend's Home?* 1987) and in Mohsen Makhmalbaf's *Gabbeh* (1996).

: 10 :

Theatrical Styles

Theater was one of the main inspirations of late modern cinema, and it served as a characteristic stylistic background in many modern films, which is why we have to consider it a separate stylistic category.

Historically, the close interaction between modern theater and cinema is also explained by the parallel activities of many modernist directors. Andrzej Wajda, Ingmar Bergman, R. W. Fassbinder, Peter Brook, Tony Richardson, Vilgot Sjöman, Jean-Marie Straub, H.-J. Syberberg, Daniel Schmid, Marguerite Duras, and Armand Gatti are some of the best-known examples, but also Jacques Rivette of the French new wave constantly referred to theater, and Agnès Varda[1] and especially Alain Resnais introduced a certain theatricality into modernist art cinema already in the early period. Even Godard approached theater in some of his most politically motivated films, like *The Joy of Learning* (1968) and *All's Well* (1972).

There are two general characteristics of theatrical style in modern cinema. One is the excessively unnatural, exaggerated, abstract way of acting that emphasized artificiality rather than psychological realism. The other is the artificial look of the sets as well as artificial, expressive lighting.

Artificiality may appear in various ways in modern theatrical styles depending on what kind of theatrical or spectacle background the film wants to evoke. In one of the first theatrical stylized films, Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad*, all the characters talk and move as they were depicting a seventeenth-century French classical drama where gestures are overdrama-

1. She was the longtime official photographer of the Théatre Populaire. That experience is clearly felt in her first film, *La pointe-courte* (1957).

tized and symbolic at the same time. Their acting is not inexpressive as in the Bressonian conception of the "model," and they are not dispassionate like Antonioni's characters. Resnais's films foreground their artificiality, their nonrealistic nature, and their situation. If Bresson represents his characters as "spiritual automata" and Antonioni represents his as suffering humans on their way toward complete emotional emptiness, the characters of *Marienbad* are pure artificial creatures with no reference to any kind of social or existential reality.[2] On the other hand, the location of the story evokes the same cultural universe: the theatrical culture of the seventeenth-century baroque with constant references to antique classicism.[3]

That artificiality of situation and character behavior is directly and overtly related to theatricality in *Last Year at Marienbad*. At the beginning of the film the characters are first shown as frozen puppets in a theater who come to life when the performance onstage ends. Furthermore, that scene foreshadows the conclusion of the story of the film inasmuch as the onstage dialogue ends with the female character saying, "And finally, I am yours." Clearly, in this scene Resnais provided a concise "model" of what will happen later, and also a clue as to how to interpret the artificial atmosphere of the character's acting style. Theatricality became a form of abstraction rather than a form of psychological realism for Resnais, which allowed him to distance his film from the surface effects of reality and create an abstract mental model. The relation between reference to theater and artificial acting style is all the more apparent, since such artificial acting style and so direct a reference to theatricality do not appear in other modern-period Resnais films.

Another important feature of *Last Year at Marienbad*'s theatrical style is visual expressionism and especially the use of sharp chiaroscuro effects. Expressionist lighting style was not new to Resnais as he used it with his earlier short films. This style was a common expressive tool in the 1950s. However, the function of this visual characteristic in this and other modern theatrical style films is not to emphasize dramatic effects like in film noirs and social realist heroic dramas. It has the function of creating an atmosphere of unrealness and making the setting look like a theatrical stage. Resnais used the

2. That is how Antonioni comments on this difference: "*Eclipse* has been compared to Marienbad, but that is wrong. I think that Resnais in *Marienbad* is quite well satisfied with his characters reduced to the state of objects. For me this is a drama." Quoted in *L'Express*, 24 May 1962.

3. *Marienbad* was shot in real locations in two Bavarian castles: interior scenes in Nymphenburg, and the garden scenes in Schleissheim.

Fig. 43. Theatrical scene in *Last Year at Marienbad* (Alain Resnais, 1961).

black-and-white contrast to create unreal atmosphere with other motives, too, for example, the woman's dress. She not only wears different dresses in different scenes, but there is a regular alteration of the color of her dress, one time all white, another time all black. This alteration has no dramatic function, not even as to when the scene takes place (sometimes she wears black in the present and white in the past, sometimes the other way around). But it refers to some shift between times or moods that cannot be related to a plot turn. As both time dimensions—past and present—of the story are considered to be imaginary, these shifts cannot be interpreted as shifts between real and unreal, only as shifts between one unreal dimension into another.

We find the same basic stylistic structure in Fellini's *8 1/2*, and probably not by chance. Although Fellini claims to not having seen *Last Year at Marienbad* before completing his own film, some similarities between the two films are striking.[4] Both films' main topic is the effects of merging of reality, memory, and fantasy. Both films have a central character who is the focus of this heterogeneous mental universe. High-contrast lighting, artificial acting style, and direct reference to stage performance go together the same way in the two films. To a lesser extent than *Marienbad*, *8 1/2* also creates an atmosphere of unrealness by the exaggerated, unnatural way of acting of many characters, not to mention the accentuated artificiality of some of their costumes and sets. Fellini also uses high black-and-white contrast to shift between reality and imagination, but many times high contrast appears not only between scenes but also within scenes, also creating a strong atmosphere of the theatrical stage. However, Fellini's spectacle reference is commedia dell'arte rather than French classical drama.[5]

4. "And to help the work of the film historians, I admit that I have never seen *Marienbad*." Ironically, the mere fact the he mentions that shows that at least he knew about it, and knew also about the similarities. "Confessione in pubblico: Colloquio con Federico Fellini," *Bianco e nero* (April 1963): 4.

5. It is worth noting that the two Fellini films that are most characteristically theatrical (the other is *Juliet of the Spirits*) in their use of chiaroscuro contrast are the work of cinema-

Starting with *8 1/2*, acting in Fellini's films means satirically exaggerated emphasis of the most important traits of a personality rather than nuanced creation of real-life characters. In the last scene of *8 1/2*, all the characters, including Guido, Fellini's alter ego, are taken out of their real-life roles and are represented as fictional characters populating the set of the planned film. Their dancing around in the strong limelight is the final statement of the film about their fictional and artificial existence, in the same mental space, while at the same time they all represent real-life figures too. *Last Year at Marienbad* is different from *8 1/2* in that for Resnais the stage, where the characters play their parts and which is imposed on them by an auteur, is a purely mental universe having no reference to reality other than the reality of the narrative; for Fellini by contrast, it is real life that becomes this stage in the auteur's mental universe. Both films' theatricality is closely linked to their genre, which is in both cases the mental journey. And the reason for this is that in both cases the mental universe the narrative is referring to is some kind of fictional genre: cinema in one case, narration as such in the other.

Not all theatrical-style modern films are of the mental journey genre, of course. Louis Malle's *Zazie in the Subway* is a parody and a satire of that "Parisian life" that other French new wave films made a cult of. Its cultural reference is the new wave fashion of mythicizing Paris with the help of an allegedly innocent approach: "What do you want, this is the new wave!" exclaims at one point Zazie's uncle. Paris is depicted in the film through the eyes of a little girl as a chaotic, bad-smelling, funny, and dubious bazaar, full of weird characters where nothing works and nothing makes sense, while Zazie makes a little mischief making fun of everything and everybody. New wave parody, however, means in *Zazie* not a direct pastiche of something like a "new wave style" but the exaggeration of the new wave's cult of the irregularities, and the new wave mythicizing of the realist environment is turned into theatrical parody.

A strong fashion of theatricality emerged during the period of political modernism, which was related to the increased political consciousness the model taken from Brechtian political theater. It was Godard who held on to the Brechtian legacy the most; however, theatrical style characterized only

---

tographer Gianni Di Venanzo, who was known for his strong lighting effects in Italian cinema in the 1960s, especially in Antonioni's *La notte* and *Eclipse*, but also from the neorealist era. Di Venanzo died in 1967, and Fellini then used Giuseppe Rotunno as cinematagrapher on most of his subsequent films.

Figs. 44–45. Theatricality in *Hitler: A Film from Germany* (Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, 1977).

very few of his films. The clearest example is *All's Well*, and perhaps *La Chinoise*. Theatrical references are much stronger in Straubs's films, especially his short film *The Bridegroom, the Comedienne and the Pimp* (1968), which includes a ten-minute-long sequence playing on a theater stage filmed from a single point of view in a long static shot. It was in fact a recording of a the-

ater performance.[6] Another highly theatrical Straub film is *Othon*, an adaptation of French seventeenth-century classical playwright Pierre Corneille's play. The actors play in antique costumes amidst the ruins on Palatine Hill with the life of modern Rome going on in the background.

Theatrical style had the greatest impact on new German cinema. In addition to Straub, one can find this style in more than one film by Werner Herzog, Fassbinder, and Syberberg. The director whose films can be characterized the most as excessively theatrical at the beginning of the 1970s was Hans Jürgen Syberberg, especially his *Ludwig–Requiem for a Virgin King* (1972). It is with Straub and Syberberg also that opera appears for the first time in modern cinema as a reference of theatrical style, and starting from the mid-1970s opera will become the most important theatrical reference.

Fassbinder's style was marked by theater in the most varied ways. It is very hard to define anything like a consistent "Fassbinder style." He tried his hand at different genres and styles, but the most consistently recurring stylistic characteristic of his films was a kind of theatrical artificiality. In some of his early films (*Gods of the Plague*, 1970, *Whity*, 1971) he started with the new wave idea of making a pastiche of popular genres like the gangster film or the western. However, the new wave directors who applied this technique altered those genres so that it described or expressed some kind of identifiable life experience of their real environment or history: Parisian life in Godard's *Breathless* and Chabrol's *The Cousins* (1959); the atmosphere of the French chanson and the experience of childhood abandonment in Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player;* the confinement of French small-town life in Demy's *The Young Girls of Rochefort* (1967). French new wave genre pastiche always served some kind of actualization: adapting a narrative form to feelings of modern ways of life. Early Fassbinder pastiches do not evoke any kind of real-life experience; he rather emphasizes the artificial and unreal atmosphere of film genres, intensifying that atmosphere to a point where the characters become vehicles for representing abstract relationships, and the environment becomes an accentuated artificial space for developing these relationships. In these two films the abstraction of space is comparable with what we find in *Marienbad*, only the references are very different: typical spaces of some film genres instead of classical theater and antique sculpture. The only film in which Fassbinder tried to adapt a pastiche to some real-life experience was *Fear Eats the Soul* (1973). This film is a free adaptation of Douglas Sirk's classical Hollywood melodrama, *All That Heaven Allows* (1955). The apparent simplicity, the straightforwardness, and high emotion-

6. From *Krankheit der Jugend* by Ferdinand Bruckner.

ality of Sirk's film resonated with Fassbinder's desire to make simple stories. As he said in an interview in 1971: "I am sure that one day I will be able to tell naïve stories."[7] Fassbinder was deeply moved by Sirk's work and decided to transplant this cinematic experience into his own story. He even imitated Sirk's use of glaring bright colors to emphasize the same unequivocal and straightforward emotions and emotional conflicts, albeit in a very different social context.

Fassbinder gets amazingly close to postmodern stylization in his early theatrical films inasmuch as his use of art historical references are essentially self-contained and are not meant to convey any direct reference to reality nor to any consistent cultural background. However, the abstract and purist nature of this intensified stylization does not let us go as far as to assert something like the postmodern style in early Fassbinder. His style, even when it gets more saturated and ornamental, is strictly oriented toward homogenized abstraction. He does not mix styles; he attempts to create a consistent theatrical style throughout the film rather than using theatrical stylization as one effect amongst others. His goal is to reach abstract representation of personal relationships, which needs some distance from a realist context. In order to do so he uses analytical tools rather than synthetic ones.

One of his main tools to achieve abstraction is the very loose connection between dialogues and dramatic situation. In this he follows the Godard-Straub trend to use dramatic situations as delivery mechanism for abstract monologues or dialogues. This effect is the most spectacular in films where Fassbinder imitates American gangster films. In one scene of his *The American Soldier* (1970), which is his most Godardian and least theatrical early film, the maid comes into the hotel room where she finds Ricky in bed with a woman named Rosa. She slowly sits on the edge of the bed and while the two others are making love, she starts telling a story almost to the camera.[8] The cinematic realism of the scene is immediately broken, and the room is transformed into a Brechtian theatrical stage where symbolic interactions take place accompanied by self-reflexive discourses instead of real actions.

Another theatrical effect reminiscent of the modernist stage used by Fassbinder was a radical reduction of the sets. Either he used an extremely minimalist background, as in his earliest films, like *Katzelmacher,* or emphasized artificial sets as in *Whity* and *The Gods of the Plague*. While acting style

7. Interview with Christian Brad Thomsen, 1971, in Vince Zalán, *Rainer Werner Fassbinder* (Budapest: Osiris, 1992), 53.

8. *Fear Eats the Soul* will be based on the story the maid tells in this film, which Fassbinder found in a newspaper.

is rather Antonioni-inspired and dispassionate in *The Gods of the Plague*, in *Whity* it is rather expressive, and more appropriate to the romantic melodrama he makes in a western setting. There is yet another sort of theatricality what we find in *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972). This film was made from one of Fassbinder's plays, and it might as well be a minimalist closed-situation drama if stylized acting and extravagant costumes did not add a theatrical touch. Here Fassbinder did not use the stage effect, neither by lighting nor by abstract set design. The fact that the whole of this more than two-hour-long film is staged in a single room, basically on the same bed, is in itself enough to create the theatrical atmosphere. Fassbinder abandoned his theaterlike filmmaking for the rest of the 1970s but returned to it in his last film, *Querelle* (1982), when postmodern's eclecticism made theatricality popular once again.

The static theatrical style of Straub and early Fassbinder had a considerable influence on modernist Swiss filmmaker Daniel Schmid, who consciously went against representation of reality in his films. He took from early Fassbinder the extreme long takes (up to ten minutes) and static compositions and from Straub the mixture of onscreen and offscreen voice-over and a deliberately theatrical way of acting. What he added was abstract theatrical stage sets together with sophisticated lighting. His close relationship with Fassbinder is shown clearly by *Shadow of Angels* (1976), a highly stylized film made from one of Fassbinder's plays, in which the main role is also played by Fassbinder himself.

We find strong theatrical stylization in many more films in the second period of modern cinema. In Marco Ferreri's parable, *Don't Touch the White Woman!* (1974), which was inspired by the construction of a huge underground shopping mall in the heart of Paris. The film was shot while the immense construction hole on the place of the old market of Les Halles was still open. Ferreri's parable makes a comparison between the demolition of the old market for the sake of an American-type shopping mall and another American campaign, which chased natives from their homeland. The obvious discordance between the story, and the anachronistic costumes on the one hand, and the real location together with the modern costumes of the "Indians" on the other, make this film a theatrical happening or performance.

The actual style in each of these films is dependent on the background cultural reference. Their theatricality is always more overt and self-conscious than that of the theatrical films of the early 1960s. Emphasized stylistic artificiality with reference to a theatrical tradition of high culture is a genuinely modern phenomenon that was less frequent in the early period and more widespread in the period starting in the late 1960s. The cult

of artificiality is dramatically expanded in the postmodern period, so the transition to postmodern is very difficult to detect in this respect too. What we can say is that whether a film represents modern or postmodern theatricality, it can be measured with respect to its stylistic homogeneity and the consistency of its cultural references. Fellini gets the closest to postmodern stylization in his *And the Ship Sails On* (1984), where he does not refer to a homogeneous, cultural, or mythological background. He rather mixes several cultural backgrounds: opera and filmmaking in a specific historical context. To create such a mixture never occurred to him in his theatrical films of the 1970s, even in his most imaginative and artificial reconstructions of different cultural mythologies, like *Satyricon* or *Fellini's Casanova.*

Likewise, however artificial-looking Fassbinder's *Querelle* might be, because of its stylistic and referential consistency it still belongs to the modernist paradigm. Fassbinder's intentions were very clear in this respect. He speaks about the "astonishing mythology" of Jean Genet that manifests itself in this story, and his interest in this story was to see

> how this strange world with its own peculiar laws relates to our own subjective sense of reality, how it brings surprising truths to the surface of this subjective reality of ours by forcing us . . . toward certain recognitions and decisions that, no matter how painful they may seem to be, bring us closer to our own lives. This also means that we get closer to our own identities. . . . Rolf Zehetbauer and I have decided that the film of Jean Genet's *Querelle* will take place in a kind of surreal landscape.[9]

Peculiar laws of a "subjective sense of reality" that express a personal identity are in clear accord with the classical surrealist idea of discovering singular psychic laws of human nature that are brought to light with the help of an abstract visionary stylistic universe. The mere fact that Fassbinder mentions "reality," "truth," and "identity" testifies to his modernist intentions whereby a consistent deep structure of reality, even if mythical, is expressed by a homogeneous aesthetic surface.

Theatricality of film style in the modern era had an essentially different source than in the postmodern era. In general we can say that theater for late modern cinema always remained a source of authentic abstraction. That is why it became so important when modern cinema fell into a crisis at the turn of the 1960s–1970s. As Pascal Bonitzer remarked in 1971: "The theater effect in the films of modernity (Oshima, Straub, Godard . . .) is the

9. Fassbinder, "Preliminary Remarks on *Querelle*," in *The Anarchy of the Imagination: Interviews, Essays, Notes*, ed. Michael Tötenberg and Leo A. Lensing (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 169.

symptom of the crisis of the mise-en-scène, of the spatial arrangement or the ideological basis thereof. Theater in the cinema means the chance of the regeneration of the signifier." [10]

Bonitzer is right to see the source of theatricality in the countercinema inspiration and that conventions of forms of art cinema (mise-en-scène and spatial arrangement) had lost their authenticity once again. This means in short, that it is modern cinema that has lost its authenticity. Modern cinema was searching for a renewal of its forms, once again, outside its realm, this time in theater. But it used theater as a source of inspiration for which "regeneration of the signifier" is an adequate phrasing. Looking for renewal of cinema in creating a theatrical film style is a typically modernist response to this crisis. Relying on theatrical mise-en-scène means a search for generating signifiers that can be imported into cinema, revitalizing the cinematic signifier. Or, as Jacques Aumont put it with regard to Rivette: "They resorted to something that from the old art of the theater could help them the best in accomplishing what they thought the mission, the essence or the goal of the cinema, was: to encounter the real." [11] Modernist theatricality is *theater-as-cinema* not *theater-in-the-cinema*. Theatrical means are used for creating a particular kind of cinema rather than transcending cinema with the help of theater. As Fassbinder put it, "In theater I would stage things as though I was doing a film, and then I made a film as though it was on the stage." [12] Even in Peter Brook's *Marat/Sade* (1966), which is basically a reproduction of the Royal Shakespeare Company's representation, Brook tried to create a genuine cinematic form—a cinematic transcription appropriate for theatrical representation. A peculiar example of theatricalization of cinema can be found in Jacques Rivette's four-hour-long film *Crazy Love* (1969). This basically half-documentary film is heavily based on long sequences about the rehearsal of a classical theatrical play. The scenes set in the theater do not merely interrupt the narrative but end up as the main stylistic substance of the film.

With his peculiar films positioned on the borders between ornamental, theatrical, and minimalist styles, Philippe Garrel was consciously geared toward the reconstruction of the cinematic signifier with the help of theatrical forms (he also made a documentary in 1967 about the group "Living

10. Pascal Bonitzer, "Cinéma/théatre/idéologie/écriture," *Cahiers du cinéma* 231 (August–September 1971): 9.

11. Jacques Aumont, "Renoir, le patron, Rivette le passeur," in *Le theâtre dans le cinéma*, Coférence du Collège d'histoire de l'art cinématographique, 3 (Paris: Cinémathèque française, 1992–93), 236.

12. "At Some Point Films Have to Stop Being Films," in *Anarchy of the Imagination*, 14.

Theater" in the United States). The theatrical effect is obtained in Garrel's films by abstract space and the abstract and symbolic gestures and object, as well as by the abstract dialogues that do not refer to a plot or to a concrete situation. Hence, his theatrical style is close to that of the early Fassbinder; however his ornamental use of objects and motives often carrying mythological meanings ties him also to Jancsó. On the other hand, his early films consist of symbolic representation of a series of different psychological states rather than a consistent narrative, and these characteristics together make him a rather peculiar phenomenon in modern cinema.

The postmodern approach is just the opposite: not the regeneration but the *deconstruction* or *elimination* of the signifier through which theater would be a transient tool rather than a "reliable" source. In Greenaway's *The Baby of Mâcon* (1993) but also in *Prospero's Books* (1991), there is a constant flow between the different aesthetic signifying systems of cinema, theater, text, and painting. Each represents a different realm underlying or superimposed on the others, and linked together by an endless flow of meanings that go across, so to speak, the frames separating these realms from one another. Deconstruction of the "cinematic signifier" means in this case, among other things, the elimination of the meaning chained to a media-specific signifier. Meaning is created by a transtextual series of signifiers, each of which are media-specific in its own right, but the meaning they make loses its generic link to a specific media context. Stylistically this translates into a series of procedures referring to transgression of limits, like different frames in the picture, or superimpositions of different media. Postmodern use of theatrical style does not attempt to homogenize its signifying system. It keeps the theatrical, the cinematic, and the painterly separated, setting them all off within quotation marks, and mixing in a transtextual flow their effects rather than their signifiers in a more or less homogeneous system.

: 11 :

Modern Cinema Trends

Throughout the previous chapters I have used a variety of categories to characterize modernist art films: style, genre, general aesthetic conception, and the cultural or artistic tradition a film refers to. The task of this chapter is to impose a certain order among these categories so that the general and homogeneous concept of modern cinema may appear as a coherent set of formal solutions characteristic of a given historical period. The categories I use derive not from a preexisting conceptual system; they were rather "found" and became generalized during detailed scrutiny of the films themselves. What will follow is therefore a systematized taxonomy of forms of art cinema in the late modern period rather than a general theoretical system of the cinematic form. These categories are the most general ones. One can always break down artistic tendencies to the level of individual works. Here the most characteristic directions followed by late modern art cinema will be treated.

These categories will characterize modern films from a predominantly formal aspect—visual style and narrative form—but alone they are insufficient to define modernism in the sixties and seventies. One cannot disregard the "content" side, that is, what kind of stories modern films tell with the help of their specific form. I found that three general thematic frameworks recur in modern films. In general terms these are the following:

1. Disconnection of the individual human being from the environment, commonly called alienation;
2. subjective, mythological, and conceptual redefinition of the concept of reality; and
3. disclosure of the idea of nothingness behind the surface reality.

These themes on the formal side appear as the "modern film genres," that is, the most widespread story patterns that can be detected during this period. What we call "modern cinema" is made up of certain combinations of specific genres with specific narrative forms and visual styles. Some of these stylistic and narrative traits existed before modern art cinema emerged, and individually all of them remained an option for art filmmakers after modernism's decline. The end of an artistic period means not the disappearance of its innovations. Instead, it signals that certain characteristic combinations of these innovations with traditional elements disappear, or that these combinations cease to be innovative. Modernist films could be made any time even after modernism as a predominant norm has ceased to exist, but—to formulate a paradox—*modernism was not modern anymore*.

Three terms served in this survey to define the most general aesthetic particularity of the modern artistic form as such: abstraction, subjectivity, and reflection. *Abstraction* means that the form refers not to traditional ways of representing nature or reality but to a conceptual structure or system that is regarded as an essential summary of the main constitutive principles of reality or nature. *Subjectivity* of the modern form means that these conceptual systems are generally presented as an auteur's proposition to be accepted *as a new artistic way* of looking at things. *Reflexivity* of modern forms means that the form is constructed in a way so that this proposition is perceived by the viewer/reader as such. In other words, the work of art represents itself as a work of art differing from an artistic tradition.

These categories are dependent on each other. As abstraction is defined in relation to nineteenth-century perceptual and psychological realism, modern abstraction is different from "primitive" or early Christian art in its sensibly conscious and individual decision to be different; in other words, in its subjectivity and reflexivity. Subjectivity as well as reflexivity can both be found separately in various premodern arts. We speak of modern forms when these three general aesthetic categories coexist interdependently.

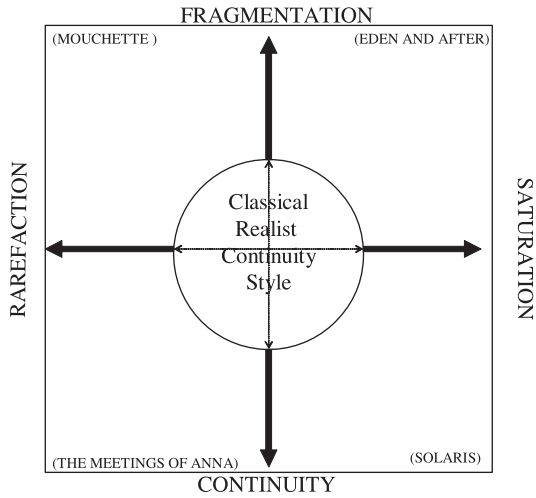
Late modern cinema bears the influence of three main film historical movements: early modern cinema of the 1920s, Italian neorealism of the 1940s, and American film noir of the 1940s and 1950s. However, we defined modern cinema as art cinema's adaptation to the modern arts, therefore it is important to find the extracinematic aesthetic influences also informing late modern cinema. These are the French *nouveau roman,* English-American pop art; American abstract expressionism; modern, especially serial, music; and the Brechtian political theater. Furthermore, an important trend of late modern cinema extensively relied upon different non-

modern or ancient cultural traditions, such as national folklore and antique mythology.

In the modern period the choice whether to construct the film's narrative and visual aspect on continuous representation of the world made a great difference. Some films systematically used the method of radical fragmentation, while others stressed radically continuous representation. Fragmentation as well as continuity represents a conscious divergence from the style of classical continuity prevailing during the twenty years that preceded the modern era. Radicalism in continuity and in fragmentation is a formal characteristic that did not disappear after modernism.

Regarding the visual quality of the films in terms of motives and compositions used I found four characteristic trends that I call "styles" and that can be ordered into two oppositions. The first trend is what I call the *minimalist* style constructed upon a variation principle of a restricted number of visual motives, most often themselves extremely reduced and austere. At the opposing pole is the *ornamental* style, also constructed upon the variation principle, but this time using a wide range of exotic, decorative visual motives usually borrowed from or inspired by ancient or folkloric cultural traditions. The next style I call the *naturalist* style, presenting the visual atmosphere of an essentially undisturbed everyday reality. Within this trend I make a distinction between the *neorealist* and the *cinéma vérité* style, whose difference is based upon the narrative organization of the plot: the neorealist trend is narratively unreflected, while the other is fundamentally self-reflective. At the opposing pole of the naturalist style is the *theatrical* style. This style is characterized above all by the characters' "unnatural" way of acting, their highly stylized behavior, and dialogues. This style often involves stylized, unnatural-looking background or theatrical sets, especially around the end of the modern period. While minimalism often mixes with naturalism, theatricality often results in some form of ornamentalism.

In the final analysis these styles represent two basic formal tendencies: one that tends to empty the image of artificial visual qualities, and the other tends to saturate it with these qualities. Combining these characteristics with those relating to the continuous/fragmented dimension of the form we can distinguish four basic formal trends in modern cinema regarding their assault on classical visual style: continuous-saturating, continuous-rarefying, fragmented-saturating, and fragmented-rarefying. The figure below is a schematic representation of these trends and their relation to one another and to classical continuity. Modern cinema can be charted as a rectangle with classical continuous narration circled in the



middle. Examples of the basic types of the modern film form are located in the corners of the rectangle.

The arrows represent the main directions in which the classical narrative art film is diverted by modernism. All directions lead toward the dissolution of continuity in the narrative with identifiable characters and locations. The dotted arrows within the circle representing classical continuity narrative style signify that even within this paradigm there can be found differences between films along these lines; the circle represents the ideal limit of the classical norm. The degree of modern artistic self-consciousness in a film depends on the "excess" by which it extends beyond this ideal circle. Even during the modernist period most films remained close to the limits of the circle. Most filmmakers' awareness of modernism did not amount to much more than applying such narrative devices as shifting back and forth between different time levels, or different levels of consciousness, and leaving certain aspects of the narrative unexplained. This was probably the most commonly acknowledged novelty of modern art cinema, at least at the beginning of the 1960s, which is well demonstrated by a short scene from Joseph Losey's first modern film made in 1962, *Eva.* At a celebration party during the Venice Film Festival the protagonist, a film director, is approached by a film critic who tells him, "I think your film is an advance on the problem of telling a story on different levels of time and consciousness." For most audiences and critics modernism basically amounted to the use of such narrative devices that made the story hard to follow. The narrative techniques responsible for this, however, soon became commonplace and audiences grew accustomed to them. Already in the late 1960s these devices did not

Table 1

	Form	
	Continuous	**Fragmented**
Style		
Minimalist	*La notte*	*Pickpocket*
Theatrical	*Katzelmacher*	*All's Well*
Ornamental	*The Red and the White*	*The Color of Pomegranates*
Naturalist	*Adieu Philippine*	*Yesterday Girl*

represent any obstacle to understanding narrative information. As I mentioned at the outset of this book, these techniques would become accepted even in Hollywood some thirty years later. This however does not mean that cinema has become "modern" once and for all; this means rather that certain techniques "survived" the art historical period in which they were invented. They have become an item in the repertory of a filmmaker's options.

In one sense of the term "modern," films that to some extent used some of the new devices were actually "modern" at the time, and still can be considered also "modernist" to the degree that they contributed to exploring the central topic of modern cinema: alienation. Losey's *Eva* is perhaps not the most innovative film of its time, as its modernism amounts to replicating the ambiance of other well-known modernist masterpieces, especially the Antonioni and Fellini films of the time,[1] yet this film is rather on the modernist side due to some of its narrative solutions.

Almost at any time during the history of cinema one can easily find films that can be plotted in any of the quadrants of the scheme. The period of late modernism is characterized by the fact that films were being made that can be grouped into every region of the scheme; in other words, *late modernism involved every possible manner of transgression of classical narrative style.* Which modernist options continued to be productive after the decline of modernism is an interesting question. Postmodern cinema continued utilizing primarily the fragmented-saturating style region (Greenaway, Jarman, Tykwer), while in the 1990s some auteurs revived the continuous-rarefying region as well (Tarr). The other two combinations continuous-saturating and fragmented-rarefying, were not revitalized after modernism's decline. The combination of the two dimensions of the figure above with the style categories is summarized in table 1 above.

The next aspect of modern cinema's formal characteristics to be examined is genre, in other words, the basic story types. I found seven genres that

1. To a great extent due to Losey's cinematographer, Gianni di Venanzo.

Table 2

	Genre						
	Mental Journey	**Investigation**	**Travel**	**Essay**	**Closed Situation**	**Satire**	**Melodrama**
Style							
Minimalist	*Last Year at Marienbad*	*L'avventura*	*Alice in the Cities*	*Not Reconciled*	*Persona*	*Playtime*	*La notte*
Theatrical	*8 ½*				*The Exterminating Angel*	*Zazie in the Subway*	*The Gods of the Plague*
Ornamental	*Solaris*				*Confrontation*		
Naturalist		*The Round-Up* *The Grim Reaper*	*Satyricon* *Yesterday Girl*	*Teorema* *I Am Curious*	*Two or Three Things I Know About Her*	*Black Peter*	

modern art cinema favored over other traditional genres: the *mental journey*, the *investigation*, the *picaresque*, the *essay*, the *closed situation*, the *satire*, and the *melodrama*. These genres, with the exception of the mental journey and the essay, were essential elements of some broader genre category in the premodern period, and they were not particularly distinguished as genres. Investigation was obviously part of the crime film genre; the picaresque form is part of various genres, especially of the western; and the war film; and melodrama was transformed into a dispassionate intellectual form. Combining these genres with the general stylistic trends we get groups listed in table 2.

The empty cells in table 2 show what combinations of forms are atypical or nonexistent in modern cinema. For example, naturalist melodrama is a characteristic form of neorealism that developed into minimalist or theatrical modern melodrama during the modernist period, which is why this form is not represented during modernism. Post-neorealist films such as Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* are the representatives of this form during the modernist period. I could not find any characteristic naturalist-style mental journey films, either. This could be explained by the fact that representation of a mental universe is contrary to representation of empirical surface reality. Nevertheless, the scenes in the train compartment in Robbe-Grillet's *Trans-Europ-Express* are partially filmed in a documentary fashion; also, the characters are playing themselves. Theatrical stylization is characteristically missing from the investigation, picaresque, and the essay genres. These genres are more easily associated with naturalist or ornamental styles.

Table 3

	Tradition				
	Avant-garde	**Film noir**	**Neorealism**	***Nouveau roman***	**Folklore/ Mythology**
Style					
Minimalist	*The Joy of Knowledge*		*La notte*	*Pickpocket*	*Silence and Cry*
Theatrical	*The Exterminating Angel*	*American Soldier*		*Last Year at Marienbad*	*Satyricon*
Ornamental			*La dolce vita*	*Successive Slidings of Pleasure*	*The Color of Pomegranates*
Naturalist	*I, a Negro*	*Breathless*	*Black Peter*	*Trans-Europ-Express*	*The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*

The next aspect from which late modern cinema can be examined is its relationship to film historical, art historical, and general cultural traditions. The main film historical sources of modern cinema are early modern cinema: expressionist, surrealist and impressionist art films, neorealism and film noir. Art historical traditions include the categories that I listed above, and the "general cultural traditions" informing modern cinema include folklore, ancient mythology, and Christian religion.

Combining the styles with their tradition sources we can point out some typical examples (see table 3). Classical avant-garde traditions had a considerable influence on all the stylistic trends, but it mixes with the ornamental-mythological form especially in the American underground such as in the films of Jack Smith or Kenneth Anger. I found neither minimalist nor ornamental style films that were influenced by film noir. The reason why one cannot find theatrical films betraying the influence of neorealism seems quite obvious, just as naturalist-style films seem to contradict folkloric or mythological influence, Pasolini's *Gospel according to Saint Matthew* being a rare exception.

The Family Tree of Modern Cinema

Since European modernist art cinema consists of a relatively closed set of films delimited in time and space made within a wide but finite range of formal variations, it is possible to outline different lines of descent or something like a "family tree" of modernist art films. The roots that determine

the main branches can be quite well defined, although many films belonging to the modernist movement betray a mixture of influences and go back to more than one initial pattern, so ultimately it is quite difficult to connect a film to only one or two sources. Further complications are raised by the fact that one particular auteur or film has more than one innovation that may become influential.

However, the main trends and the most important descents appear quite clearly. I will distinguish three main trajectories in modern European art cinema. Each can be characterized by a set of formal features, some of which appear in all of them, some only in one or two. The basis of the definition of each of these trends will be the way these features combine. In later periods of modernism, these initial trends become somewhat overlapping but initially they are easily distinguishable.

The first trend I will call *post-neorealist*, alluding to its main stylistic source. The main characteristic figure of this trend is Antonioni, and the most characteristic features of it are radical continuity; a sort of geometrical minimalism in the composition; picaresque, melodrama, or investigation genres; and a split between the characters and the background world. A sort of folkloric ornamentalism has developed from this trend, especially in the late 1960s. Characteristic and original auteurs of this trend are Jancsó, Olmi, Angelopoulos, Wenders, Ackerman, and Forman. Jancsó and Angelopoulos developed the ornamental potential of this trend, Forman developed its satirical potential, Wenders and Ackerman brought it close to the absurd, and Olmi combined it with the French *nouveau roman* trend.

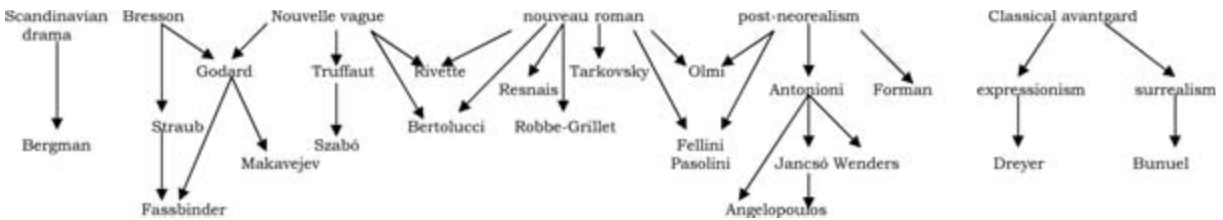
The next main trend is what I call the *nouveau roman* trend, which partly overlaps with what is traditionally called the group *rive gauche* of the new French cinema of the early 1960s. Its characteristic figure is Alain Resnais, and its most characteristic features include radical continuity as well as radical fragmented forms; use of nonlinear time; reflexivity in the form; theatricality and ornamentalism; and its main genre is investigation. The main representatives of this trend are Robbe-Grillet, Tarkovsky, Duras, and Nemec. Robbe-Grillet developed it toward serial construction, Tarkovsky developed the metaphysical potential of this form, Duras has made radical use of literary narration, and Nemec developed its surrealist potential.

The third main trend is what is traditionally called the *nouvelle vague*, the new wave, with Godard as its epitome. This trend's characteristic features are the use of cinéma vérité style and parody forms, reflexivity, and radical discontinuity; and its characteristic genre is the film essay or the genre parody. Main representatives include Truffaut, Rivette, Richardson, early-period Szabó, Makavejev, Kluge, Schamoni, and Fassbinder in some of

his early films. Richardson and Szabó are followers of Truffaut, Kluge and Schamoni are mainly following Godard in their early works just like Makavejev, Fassbinder develops the pastiche aspect together with different forms of excessive minimalist or ornamental stylization, and Rivette bridges the new wave and *nouveau roman* trends.

There are of course many auteurs, among them some of the greatest, who cannot be classified within one trend only, and in some cases they cannot be classified at all. Bergman and Bresson simply do not fit into any of these trends, although Bresson simultaneously exerted a considerable influence over very different types of auteurs, such as Tarkovsky, Fassbinder, and Straub. Bergman by contrast remains the most stand-alone figure of modern cinema, having virtually no followers, still he follows a well discernable Scandinavian theatrical tradition. Buñuel revitalized the early surrealist tradition, but he was the only director to take this path in the modernist movement. Fellini, just like Pasolini, could be categorized in different trends at different periods of his career. Both began within a clearly post-neorealist melodrama tradition, which they both discard in the late 1960s for an increasingly mythological ornamental style based partly on narrative techniques inherited from the *nouveau roman* trend. Because their most characteristic modernist works were made in their mythological periods, this trend characterizes them more than their post-neorealist works.

The figure below shows the main lines of descent of modern cinema. For the sake of clarity auteurs' names rather than movie titles are given, although none of these names represent the integral works of the given author. For the same reason, I omitted many other names that could epitomize the same line of descent. I tried to find those auteurs who succeeded in creating a considerably autonomous individual style and also those who can illustrate the linkage between the individual strands. Thus Godard links the influences of Bresson and the new wave; Rivette and Bertolucci connect new wave with the *nouveau roman* trend; Olmi, Pasolini, and Fellini connect post-neorealism with the *nouveau roman.* These examples represent only the most characteristic influences even if this influence is detectable only in one film of the given filmmaker. Godard's influence on Fassbinder, for example, is detectable only in his earliest period, whereas Bertolucci was under the influence of the new wave throughout the 1960s. The *nouveau roman*'s influence on Rivette is palpable only during the early 1970s, and same is true regarding Tarkovsky (*Solaris*, 1972, and *Mirror*, 1974); while Olmi's relationship with the *nouveau roman* trend is restricted to one important work, *The Fiancés* (1963). All these masters have created their own


Scandinavian drama
Bergman
Bresson
Nouvelle vague
Godard
Truffaut
Rivette
Straub
Szabó
Bertolucci
Makavejev
Fassbinder
nouveau roman
Resnais
Tarkovsky
Olmi
Robbe-Grillet
Fellini
Pasolini
post-neorealism
Antonioni
Forman
Jancsó
Wenders
Angelopoulos
Classical avantgard
expressionism
surrealism
Dreyer
Bunuel

individual "auteur" styles, and the figure shows some traceable roots of these personal styles.

As mentioned, most art films in the modern period consist of a certain mixture of stylistic and narrative solutions stemming from different original sources. Speaking of a certain "influence," I mean several different possible relationships between films. The first is *direct influence*, when two subsequent films have important stylistic or structural similarities, and concrete biographical connections can be verified between them as well, inasmuch as the auteur of the later work was aware of the earlier one or there are explicit verbal manifestations of the influence. That is the case of Antonioni's influence on Jancsó. The next is the *indirect influence*, when no evidence of a direct connection between two works can be found but yet both were made in the same cultural context, so one can reasonably suppose that the auteur of the later work had known about the earlier one when, perhaps unconsciously, choosing a similar form. This is the relationship between Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* and Godard's *My Life to Live*. I will call the third *spreading of solutions*, when some formal solutions become so ubiquitous in a given period that anybody might use them without even knowing their origins. Not all the films that use the jump cut are "Godardian," yet there is a connection between films using this device consistently and Godard's films. Similarly, one should not refer automatically to *Hiroshima* when encountering a "stream of consciousness" kind of narrative in the modern period. The fourth possible relationship is *parallelism*, when two films made within close proximity of each other, with no biographical references to each other, display similar systematic solutions. This is the case of Resnais's *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961) and Fellini's *8 1/2* (1963) or Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* and Vlacil's *Marketa Lazarová* (both made in 1966).

In all of these cases we may suppose some kind of awareness of the available and fashionable solutions or at least the problems to which the individual styles were created as solutions. Because the term "influence" is evocative of a direct and conscious relationship, I'd rather speak of reference between two films where the reference may be generative in case of direct influence and merely evocative in case of simple parallelism.

PART THREE

Fig. 46. *La dolce vita* (Federico Fellini, 1960).

Appearance and Propagation of Modernism (1949–1958)

: 12 :

Critical Reflexivity or the Birth of the Auteur

Setting exact period boundaries to art historical phenomena is always somewhat arbitrary. However, there are always important works of art that can be considered turning points. Here I will try to determine the relevant appearances of basic formal principles of the second phase of modernism in the late 1940s and 1950s. I will look for the (re)emergence of the three most general principles of modern art in the cinema of the 1950s: *reflexivity*, *abstraction*, and *subjectivity*.

The way and the circumstances under which these formal principles appear in the fifties are quite different from those in the twenties. Early modernism was essentially a phenomenon of industrial mass culture; late modernism was the first cultural manifestation of the information- and entertainment-based leisure civilization. At least forty years passed between the two modernist periods, and those years represented the most important phase in the evolution of modern societies: the period between the birth and the decline of the mass society based on heavy industry leading to the appearance of postindustrial Western civilization. The first phase of modernism was mainly an isolated national phenomenon in German, French, and Soviet cinema, whereas the second phase of modernism was a general phenomenon of global dimensions: apart from most of the European filmmaking countries, Japanese, Indian, and Brazilian new cinemas as well as the North American underground were all contributing to the second modernist movement. It was important as a global film art movement as much as a local national cultural phenomenon. Finally, in the twenties, cinematic modernism (as a silent film movement) was influenced mainly by the visual arts avant-garde, whereas the second phase in the talking era was influenced in large part by modern literature and theater. We should take all these

factors into consideration when examining modernist traits as general determinants. So it is no surprise that modernist traits start to emerge in the early 1950s predominantly if not exclusively through problems of narration and dramatic composition.

Reflexivity is probably the most complex and complicated general trait characterizing modernism in the arts, and I will discuss this below in greater detail. I do not want to enter into theoretical details about reflexivity in the cinema, as there has been enough attention paid so far to this phenomenon.[1] Here, I will concentrate on the specific form and function of reflexivity in modern cinema.

Before that, however, I have to discuss another phenomenon that played a crucial role in modern reflexivity as well as in modern cinema in general as its fundamental ideology and one of its main distinctive features: the birth of the film auteur.

The Birth of the Auteur

Voice-over narration in the early 1950s, especially in those cases where the voice is that of the director, like in some films of Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, or Ingmar Bergman, can be interpreted as a sign of the growing consciousness of the film director's auteurial dominance. The role of the film director in the creation process was regarded as more and more important in this period. This is not to say, of course, that there were no autonomous and innovative "auteurs" in the silent or early sound film period. The "birth of the auteur" means the widening acceptance of the idea that the director's autonomy in the creative process was equal to that of the producer or the writer, and further, that the real auteur of the film is the director rather than the producer or the writer. This idea became the dominant ideology and practice in the art cinema of the sixties and seventies.

The idea of the director's intellectual and artistic autonomy was sporadically present already in prewar cinema, especially within the avant-garde, but in the late 1940s it was far from a generally accepted view, not to mention the legal aspects of this problem. Even in France, where the idea started to take shape in the late 1940s, according to the law until 1957 the auteur of the film was none other than the producer. In his seminal essay "L'avenir du

1. The most elaborate work on reflexivity in the cinema is Robert Stam's *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). The references and the selected bibliography found in the book will offer a good overview of the literature on this topic.

cinéma" written in 1948, Alexandre Astruc still criticized the contemporary state of the film industry where "the real film auteurs are not the directors but the producers. There is no complete works of Hitchcock or Wyler, there are complete works of Selznik or Darril Zanuck."[2]

The first stage in the formation of the auteur-director concept was the parting of the ways of commercial, avant-garde, and art-film practices in the late twenties. In the avant-garde practice, already in the 1920s there was naturally no question about who the auteur was. The second step was a certain conception of film history, developed by André Bazin, according to which cinema evolved along parallel alternative stylistic solutions. A particular film's form was ultimately dependent, according to Bazin, on the stylistic choice of the director. Bazin was the first to associate names of film directors with given stylistic trends and did not consider them as simple inventors of technical solutions of storytelling, but as autonomous artists choosing between possible stylistic and narrative solutions. The idea of the filmmaker's autonomy from technical and aesthetic constraints of the film industry was founded here. Orson Welles's conflicts with Hollywood became a crucial argument in this respect. It was seen as evidence of the auteur-director's war of independence against the institutions of the commercial film industry. This autonomy was manifested by the declaration of film auteurs in 1952, which was the first manifesto of art-film directors as autonomous auteurs.[3] At the same time, the first theoretical thesis about the film director as an independent auteur was formulated by Astruc. He elevated the film director's auteurship over the influence of the producer because the creative quality of the director's work is comparable to a writer's creation and the film is as much a direct expression of the director's thoughts and feelings as the literary work is that of the writer's. For the real independence of the film director, Astruc proposed, it was necessary that the scriptwriter make his own films, and this way the distinction between auteur and film director really becomes insignificant.[4]

As we can see, the first theoretical manifestation of idea of the auteurship of the director is associated with literary creation. For a film director to take the place of the producer as the auteur of the film, it was necessary for him to become an auteur in a sense of literary creation, too. Understanding a film director as an auteur meant for Astruc the filmmaker's mastery over the literary material. In the technical sense this meant that either the film

2. Astruc, "L'avenir du cinéma."

3. See chapter 1.

4. Astruc, "Naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde: Le caméra-stylo."

director should write his own script or that there should be no literary material behind the film in the traditional sense. Both implications became solid practice in the period of modernism.

Astruc's argument was part of the contemporary debates over auteurship in the cinema that were taking place in French film industry circles from 1944 on. Contemporary filmmakers had to fight for their rights not only against the producers but against the writers, too, who also claimed the right for exclusive auteurship over the film. Astruc's emphasis on the filmmaker's qualification as an auteur only in his role as a writer stems from a strong argument in this debate that distinguished between director-auteurs and director-technicians. The French scriptwriters union was ready to acknowledge auteur status only to those directors who also wrote their own scripts. As French writer Marcel Pagnol wrote in 1945:

> If they [the directors] make a film from someone else's book, they are only subordinates . . . We don't have contempt for the directors, on the contrary. Jean Renoir, René Clair, Duvivier, Carné have done a lot for French art. But if they need someone else's manuscript, they are only directors and not auteurs. Their creation is only secondary, they cannot start it before the auteur has finished his own.[5]

Astruc's conception of the film auteur was rooted in the same understanding of film as a form of artistic expression of the same intellectual quality as literature. For him, making a film was another form of writing, but now the writing tool was a "camera-pen." Writing and making a film was conceived of as one and the same activity. A filmmaker for Astruc could be an "auteur" precisely because of this *identification* of literature and cinema.

The final phase of the "birth of the auteur-director" occurred when the concept of the auteur separated itself from literary creation. That step was made by the critics of the *Cahiers du cinéma* with their "politics of auteurship."

In the opinion of the critics at *Cahiers*, the auteurship of filmmakers was no longer a theoretical consideration but instead a critical practice pointing toward a new filmmaking strategy. That is why Truffaut in 1955 called it *la politique des auteurs*, "the politics of auteurship," rather than the *theory* of auteurship. In fact, it would be quite hard to argue that *la politique des auteurs* was a coherent and detailed "theory" of auteurship, although it seems right to say that this practice leaned on the romantic idea of the almighty

5. Marcel Pagnol, cited in Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, Jean-Jacques Meusy, and Vincent Pinel, *L'Auteur du film: Description d'un combat* (Lyon: Institut Lumière/Actes Sud, 1996), 132.

individual genius.[6] It was rather a tendency among film critics to distinguish certain filmmakers by pointing out recurring distinctive features, or a certain personal "touch," characteristic of the whole of their corpus, rather than by assessing the artistic quality of their individual works. The first important trait of the *Cahiers*-style theory of auteurship was that it referred not to the quality of individual works but to a certain coherence of a series of works by an auteur. Or, as Eric Rohmer put it, "The politics of the *select works* finally yields to the politics of the *complete works*."[7]

The next important trait is that the quality of auteurship was distinguished from the literary quality of the storyboard. In other words, the "personal touch" had to be specifically cinematic. However—and that is why the auteur's politics could not be as coherent as a theory—there were no real criteria of what could be considered the "personal touch." It could be any technical or narrative device or way of character representation, regardless of thematic choice, and applied in any style, genre, or mode of production.

To provide a coherent set of criteria, French criticism introduced the notion of mise-en-scène as a specifically cinematic qualifier of film auteurship. This implies first that only film directors could qualify for the title of the "auteur," since the only criterion of auteurship concerned the work of the film director. "No one can enter the Olympus of the cinema if one is not a *metteur en scène*."[8]

In the beginning of the 1950s, however, mise-en-scène was still a new and rather vague term in French film criticism, at least as a qualitative category. In 1954 Robert Bresson was asked by the magazine *La technique cinématographique* to define this notion. According to his definition, mise-en-scène refers to the unique character of two aspects of the film form: the

6. John Caughie notes: "Auteurism was not itself a theory: *Cahiers* proposed it as a policy, . . . But by adopting a fairly consistent romantic position in relation to creativity, it exposed film aesthetics to the contradictions of those romantic principles of individual creativity which formed the basis of nineteenth- and twentieth-century criticism, when applied to an expressive form which was collective, commercial, industrial and popular." John Caughie, *Theories of Authorship* (London: Routledge, 1981), 13.

7. Eric Rohmer, "Les lecteurs des « Cahiers » et la politique des auteurs," *Cahiers du cinéma* 63 (1956): 55.

8. *Cahiers du cinéma* 68 (February 1957). Mise-en-scène means in French "putting on stage." *Metteur en scène* is a stage director in the first place. But it is also applied in filmmaking, together with another word used only in the film industry, *réalisateur.* As opposed to *réalisateur, metteur en scène* evokes a higher, more autonomous artistic creation, and refers to the autonomous character of the director's work.

camera angles and the shot length.[9] The coherent and conscious choice of these factors driven by the logic of the shot order (*découpage*) is what makes someone an auteur and provides the unique character of mise-en-scène. Auteur and mise-en-scène were already two sides of the same coin for Bresson as well.

The general use of the term mise-en-scène, however, is less restrictive. In the technical sense, anything can be considered as a constitutive element of mise-en-scène that creates the cinematic texture of staging (as opposed to postproduction and editing); in other words, anything that makes the difference between the literary rough material and its cinematic visualization. Strictly speaking of course, there can be no film without a mise-en-scène. So, what French criticism in the late 1950s meant by the term was the *personal touch in the mise-en-scène*, or in a very vague sense, the *autonomy* of the mise-en-scène as opposed to the rules of genres dictated by the script. This independence lies at the core of Bresson's definition:

> For an auteur who deserves this name, a choice is determined by his calculations or his instincts and not by pure chance. For him, and for him only, once the order of the shots (*découpage*) is determined, each photographed shot will have only one well-defined camera angle and a certain given duration. I am only interested in a film behind which I can feel the auteur.[10]

It is not the literary script that determines the mise-en-scène in the film, but the continuity of the script, the *découpage*. This means that the technical plan of a film is not technical at all, but has the same kind of intellectual autonomy as the literary material itself. In the final analysis the emphasis on mise-en-scène was the result of a search to anchor the auteurial autonomy of the film director. As Bazin noted: "They [the young critics] emphasize the mise-en-scène so much because they distinguish to a large extent the film material itself, the organization of the humans and the objects, *which has its own meaning, I mean moral as well as aesthetic meaning*."[11]

The whole problem of the mise-en-scène goes back to the filmmaker's aesthetic and moral independence from the dominance of the producer. What was at stake here was replacing the dominance of industrial, commercial, and artistic conventions and clichés of the cinema with the sole dominance of the individual auteur's personality. The emphasis on the mise-en-scène

9. Interview with Robert Bresson, "Définition de la mise en scène," *La technique cinématographique* 139 (January 1954): 33.

10. Ibid.

11. Bazin, *La politique des auteurs* (Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, 1972), 145, emphasis added.

as the first-order qualifier of the film is a direct claim of the filmmaker's aesthetic and moral autonomy. Godard's famous saying that "a tracking shot is a moral question" is not a self-evident allusion to the organic relationship between aesthetic form and content; it is rather a claim for the moral and aesthetic independence of the *cinematic text* as opposed to the *literary text*.

Truffaut and others were eagerly seeking moral, intellectual, and even financial independence and autonomy in filmmaking despite the rigid industrial framework of the film industry. What they were chasing was not specific subject matters or a specific style, even less the representation of any political or social movement. All they were looking for was a sign of autonomy, if even in the midst of the strictest industrial discipline, as in the case of Hollywood directors. The doctrine of auteurship was the assurance that no rules, no constraints, not even aesthetic ones, could match their wish to break out of the French film industry dominated by classical theatrical and literary constraints. The auteur's politics was a liberationist campaign of French film critics who considered themselves as potential or actual filmmakers trying to prepare the ideological ground for their intrusion into the film industry.

That is why the "personal touch" was important for them to the point that it overruled the otherwise much more obvious critical criterion: aesthetic value. One should not forget that the term "auteur's politics" was introduced in 1955, when the two leading theorists of this doctrine, Truffaut and Rohmer, both had already made their first full-length films (*A Visit*, and *Bérénice*, respectively, both 1954), so they could already consider themselves filmmakers (Godard even said that film criticism for them was only but another form of filmmaking). Downplaying the significance of aesthetic value was a way of liberating film criticism from a crystallized canon. The auteur's politics was a voluntaristic campaign to enforce a different canon. But this canon could not be defined by solid aesthetic or technical rules. The canon was not "that is how you must make a film," but "no matter what you do, no matter how you do it, you must be original." And if *la politique des auteurs* could not be coherent as a theory, it was very coherent as a policy. The choice of the "auteurs" was very much dependent on the personal taste of the critics self-nominated to decide who is and is not an "auteur." The choice was only to a little extent influenced by the inherent aesthetic quality of the individual works of a particular auteur. They venerated individuals and not works of art. That is why Bazin criticized *la politique des auteurs*, calling it an "aesthetic cult of personality."[12] Once an "auteur" was chosen, he was cho-

12. Bazin, "De la politique des auteurs," *Cahiers du cinéma* 70 (1957): 2–11.

sen forever, regardless of his future actions. Robert Lachenay agrees with Truffaut in this respect: "I haven't seen *Mr. Arkadin* yet, but I do know that it is a good film, because it is by Orson Welles, and Welles couldn't make a Delannoy film even if he wanted to."[13] Truffaut does not speak about a good film or a bad film but a Welles film and a Delannoy film. A Welles film may not be so good, but still it is a Welles film and that is the important thing. The "aesthetic cult of personality" was therefore not a cult of a specific auteur's technique or art; it was a cult of a taste oriented by the liberty of the artist. And in this taste Jacques Becker had his place next to Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock had his next to Robert Bresson, and Joseph Mankiewicz became as important as Orson Welles or Roberto Rossellini. This way, the "young Turks" of the *Cahiers* built up the first strong artistic canon of the cinema based on a "pantheon" or an "academy" of great personalities of the history of cinema. If Bazin introduced film historical sensibility into film criticism, they introduced film historical sensibility into filmmaking. After all, *la politique des auteurs* was a romantic revolt against the dictatorship of aesthetic rules in the name of immediate personal experience.

The *Cahiers*-style conception of auteurship, while radical, is not normative. It is a *critical* category that is not prescriptive regarding any specific form or content. The notion of auteurship associated with Astruc by contrast is a normative conception based on a specific use of the cinema. Most filmmakers in the modern period followed the Astrucian conception identifying modern cinema with an intellectual, literary, personal, even lyrical, subjective filmmaking, and trying to avoid solid narrative and generic patterns. But reflexivity in the postwar era was fundamentally based on the Truffautian critical conception of the film auteur as the ultimate master and critic of cinematic forms and simultaneously of reality. When reflexivity is understood as the *auteur's* reflection on the medium it becomes *critical reflection*. It is with the idea that the film has an individual auteur who has his own personal relationship to reality and to the medium that critical reflection appears in the cinema.

Historical Forms of Reflexivity

Reflexive procedures are generally used to suppress the illusion effects created by aesthetic conventions. The result of artistic self-reflection is that the artificial nature of the artifact is laid bare. This can be carried out in various

13. Robert Lachenay, "Petit journal intime du *cinéma*," *Cahiers du cinéma* 48 (June 1955): 39

ways, and this may serve different purposes. There are more explicit and direct ways, when, for example, the auteur verbally comments on the film within the film itself, and there are more subtle and hidden procedures when the film is reflected by its own narrative or visual composition as belonging to a genre, style, or to a certain group of works of art. And there are cases where only external knowledge about the auteur or the film can prove the reflexive character of a film, which may act on the whole film or on certain parts of it.

If we consider reflexivity as a form of suspending the fiction and breaking the illusion effect, we will recognize that this can happen only with regard to the immediate context of the narrative fiction. The fictional character of a story can be suspended only by a direct communicative act, which is not mediated by the conventions of the fiction itself. Reflexivity creates a *hole*, so to speak, in the texture of the fiction through which the viewer is directly connected to the aesthetic apparatus of the fiction.

The ultimate goal of reflexive procedures is to create a direct discursive relationship between the auteur and the audience, whereby the auteur may say something not only according to the aesthetic rules of a genre but also *about* the rules themselves according to which the work of art in question was made. At this point, however, a distinction seems necessary. Reflexivity is not only a technique and a play with the technique. Modernist reflection goes back to the critique of the artifact as a source of an illusion of a corrected reality. It seems to be right to look for the source of this self-critical consciousness in European literature and theater in the early seventeenth century. One can agree with Robert Stam that a bridge links the narrative reflexivity of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1615) and modern cinema. The main virtue of this linkage is that it is based on a distinction between reflexivity as a simple revealing of the fictional illusion and reflexivity as a moral critique of reality by means of revealing the fictional illusion. What Cervantes discovered was fiction as an *alternative and corrected moral universe* to reality. That is why modern reflexive forms of art are never a simple play with trompe l'oeil. They always have an important element of a critical attitude with respect to the moral validity of the artistic creation of illusions as opposed to the moral invalidity of reality.

This critical attitude is the basis for the difference between uses of reflexivity in the silent period, the late-modern period, and the postmodern period. Reflexivity in the late modern period means not simple self-referentiality but also a fundamental *critical approach vis-à-vis the medium* within which it is realized. That critical attitude is clearly missing from early modernist as well as from postmodernist cinema while self-referential techniques surface here and there constantly throughout the history of cinema.

In order to understand the development of modern cinema it seems important to make a distinction between early modern and late modern uses of reflexive techniques rather than between modern and postmodern reflexivity. Regarding the latter distinction, postmodern reflexive strategies can be considered as a return to the baroque play with trompe l'oeil. In postmodern artistic reflection, the idea of art's moral superiority disappears. This is why if a postmodern work breaks the texture of the fiction, it only discloses another fictional layer rather than relates fiction to reality. A work of art is reflected upon as a text behind which there are only other texts, to an infinite regression. There is no place for a modernist critical attitude in this conception.[14]

Unlike self-reflexivity in late modern cinema, in early modernism self-reflexivity is always apologetic. It expresses the overwhelming enthusiasm toward the new possibilities provided by the cinematic medium. Among the early examples of reflexivity in film, the most typical and profound include Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* (1924)[15] and Dziga Vertov's *Man with the Movie Camera* (1929). Both explore the relationship between the work of art and the spectator, and are remarkable manifestations of early modern cinema's self-consciousness. In early cinema, *Sherlock Jr.* is probably the most profound and most complex comment of film spectatorship as far as its psychological and cultural implications are concerned. This film compares the effects of watching cinema with the effects of reading and shows how the cinematic illusion of reality is more effective in practical life than theories contained in books. Cinematic fiction, according to *Sherlock Jr.*, is a virtual reality, and the spectator takes his place between the actual and the virtual. The spectator brings his dreams, wishes, and desires, and the film provides the power of the unlived experience. From the connection of the two the power of the moving image is born and has the power to influence the reality of the spectator's life. Disclosing the fiction in *Sherlock Jr.* is an apologetic,

14. Thus I cannot agree with Robert Stam when he considers the Brechtian political engagement of reflexivity as a postmodern phenomenon (Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 9). Brecht is a genuinely modernist auteur whose political commitment is a witness to the moral seriousness of modernism. His strategy of *Vervremdungseffekt* is precisely aimed at directing the attention of the audience to a social reality hiding "behind" or "in front of" the theatrical scene. Moreover, the Brechtian theater is highly critical not only toward social reality but toward theatrical conventions also.

15. There is another film of Buster Keaton about filmmaking, *The Cameraman* (1928) played and produced by him and directed by Edward Sedgwick. In this film Buster plays a newsreel cameraman. Probably this film is the first representation of the problem of how the media influences and even creates its own subject matters.

not a critical, gesture. Although the fiction in the dream, as well as on the screen, seems to be better and more powerful than reality, at the end this power is drained by reality.

The other great example of self-consciousness in early cinema, Vertov's *Man with the Movie Camera*, represents cinema as a tool of the improved vision of the artist. The creative "auteur" represented by Vertov is very different from the one reflected on in the films of Fellini, Bergman, or Godard. Vertov's man with the movie camera is an intelligent extension of the "mechanical eye," the machine itself. For Vertov's camera is not a "fountain pen," it is not a tool serving the auteur's self-expression. On the contrary, a "man with the camera" has to give up his autonomy and accept the superiority of the "camera eye," which provides more perfect vision than natural sight. The camera helps him grasp real life instead of expressing his inner imagination. "As a result of this action combining a liberated and perfect machine and the strategic mind of the man who controls, supervises, and calculates, the representation of even the most common things obtains an unusual freshness and thereby becomes more interesting."[16] Vertov has a fundamentally optimistic attitude to the idea of the dissolution of the auteurial subjectivity in favor of objectively recording phenomena of life hitherto reachable only to subjective representation.

Reflexivity both in *Sherlock Jr.* and in *The Man with the Movie Camera* is used to create a direct relationship between the viewer and the medium as a tool bypassing the "user" of the medium, the *auteur.* In *Sherlock Jr.* the film appears as a tool to be used by the spectator to make reality better and more appropriate for his goals. There is no room for an auteur in this system. In Vertov's film the auteur is basically an extension of the equipment and this idea leaves no place for auteurial reflection. In both films cinema appears as an *anonymous technological tool* rather than a work of art made by an auteur.

The Emergence of Critical Reflexivity: Bergman's *Prison*

Postwar modernist reflection on the contrary is closely related with the "birth of the auteur" as an individual subject in the cinema. Reflexivity here is understood as the *auteur's* personal reflection on the medium and on reality.

The consciousness that the auteur is at the center of the film appears in many forms in films during the 1950s and, interestingly enough, not only in Europe. There is more than one case in Hollywood filmmaking in this pe-

16. Dziga Vertov, *Articles, journaux, projets* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1972), 32.

riod where the idea of auteurship emerges in one way or another. Just to cite four of them: Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), Nicholas Ray's *In a Lonely Place* (1950), Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly's *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), and Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man* (1955). These films are novel in that they represent filmmaking already as a specific terrain of human relationships rather than as a neutral medium or a mere technological device. Thus, in certain respects, a critical attitude also may appear vis-à-vis the medium itself.

Conceived in this way, the earliest example of modernist critical reflexivity is Bergman's first entirely independent work as scriptwriter and director, *Prison* (1948, released in March 1949), which introduced modern reflexivity into European cinema at least ten years before modernism proper and seven years before the critical conception of auteurship.

Prison presents a highly complicated structure of self-reflection, which will be quite rare even later in the modernist period. The film consists of different narratives either embedded in each other or referring to one another. It starts with a rather long prologue (ten minutes) followed by the credits. The credits themselves are rather unusual, too, for they are not written but told by a voice-over referring to the introductory scenes: "You have seen the prologue of the film that starts here. We are in December, it is midday; people are hurrying. The film is called *Prison*." The reason why Bergman's solution is particularly remarkable is that in the exposition we can in fact see a making of a film. Since we do not get any clue as to what the film being produced will be about, even its title, this comment immediately suggests that the two films (the one seen in the prologue and the one called *Prison*) are the same, and that Bergman refers to his making his own film, as Fellini will do fourteen years later in *8 1/2* or Wajda in *Everything for Sale* (1969). However, later in the film it becomes clear that the two films are not the same; the director in the film is not to be identified with Bergman. But this will become clear only at the end of the film. As Bergman, the *real auteur*, stepped forward this way in the beginning, the metaphorical self-reference to the *fictional auteur* holds till the end. Because the two films were associated in this manner in the exposition, the viewer cannot help thinking of the possibility of equating the two, and one of the questions to be answered will be, what is the relationship between the real and the fictional auteurs?

The plot of the movie begins with an old man arriving at a studio where a film is being made. He turns out to be the old math teacher of Martin, the director. When he arrives, Martin stops the shooting for a lunch break. At lunch, the elderly man, whom we learn was for a short while in an asylum, tells about a film project of his. According to his theory, hell is on earth, and making people feel comfortable in their everyday lives is the devil's work.

Evil has conquered the Earth, and that is what he wants Martin to make a film about. In the next scene the director tells this story to friends, Thomas, a journalist, and his wife, Sofia. Talking about hell on earth reminds Thomas of the story of a prostitute he met some time ago and interviewed. He thinks that this could be a good topic for such a film. He starts reading out loud the story he wrote about the girl, after which Martin concludes: "There is nothing in this to make a film about." That is where the prologue ends and where the credits and the auteurial reflection comes. What follows in the second part of the film is the tragic story of the prostitute, Birgitta Carolina, interwoven with the happy ending to the story of Thomas' and Sofia's marital crisis. After the two storylines come to an end (Birgitta Carolina commits suicide, Thomas and Sofia reunite), we return to the studio, where the old teacher meets again the director to hear his opinion on the idea of a film about hell on earth. Martin tells him that such a film would be impossible to realize, for one cannot end a film with questions that provoke anxiety in the viewer.

It is only at this point that the whole complicated system of references in the film becomes clear. A film is being made, we do not know about what. This makes a man launch an idea about a possible topic for the director, which makes the director think whether or not a film could be based on this topic. The idea makes Thomas remember a story, which he thinks could be a good illustration of this theme, and of which Martin in turn believes is *not* a good subject for a film. Then Bergman enters and tells the audience that this is where *his* film starts. At this point, we are talking about four films: (1) Martin's film, (2) the film idea of the old man, (3) Thomas's story as a possible subject matter for a film, and finally, (4) Bergman's film. It turns out that the fourth film, *Prison*, is nothing but the continuation of the third film (Thomas's story), which is supposed to illustrate the thesis of the old man (second film), and about the feasibility of which Martin is trying to decide. In the final analysis, Bergman is executing Thomas's idea, which, according to him, is an example of the old man's thesis. Talking about *Prison* in an interview, Bergman literally repeats what the teacher says in the film: "For me, hell has always been a most suggestive sort of place; but I've never regarded it as being located anywhere else than on earth. Hell is created by human beings—on earth!"[17]

The different parts of the prologue and the main story refer to each other by association. The old man's idea is triggered by the fact that a film is being made; Thomas's proposing the story of Birgitta Carolina is triggered by the

17. *Bergman on Bergman*, 40.

old man's idea, and the rest of the film is triggered by Thomas's proposed story line. It is not metaphorical reflection, a kind of "mise en abîme"[18] we have to allow in this film, it is rather a "chain reaction" of associative references: the old man refers to Martin's film, Thomas refers to the old man's idea, and the following film refers to Thomas's story. This chain reaction leads to the final reflective gesture in the film, which closes the whole system into a circle, whereby Martin tells the old man that his idea is impossible to realize. However, we are already at the end of Bergman's story, which is in fact a realization of the old man's idea and the continuation of Thomas's story. That is where the viewer realizes that the shooting scenes cannot be self-referential. Since Martin refuses the old man's idea, he in fact thinks that a film of the kind the viewer has just seen is not possible, so he cannot be shooting *Prison* in the film and his character cannot be identified with Bergman. What Martin keeps refusing in the prologue and epilogue is in fact nothing but Bergman's film, *Prison*. Giving his answer to the old man, Martin mentions Birgitta as if he in fact had accepted Thomas's suggestion about the interpretation of her story, and repeats that a film cannot be made about her nor about hell on earth. When they finish their conversation, the lights go out in the studio, and that is the end of the film as well.

Martin is not making *Prison*, but *Prison* includes Martin who thinks that a film like *Prison* is impossible. Martin is not to be identified with Bergman, but his presence in the film represents Bergman's inner argument with his *other self*. The fictional auteur is the critical *antithesis* of the real auteur introduced at the beginning of the film. In this film Bergman expresses his own doubts about filmmaking, just like Fellini and Wajda thirteen-fifteen years later, and in a more general sense, he formulates the deepest paradox of modern art. As Martin formulates normative expectations (what kind of stories *can* and *cannot* be told, how a film *should be* ended), he defines the film in which he talks, as something that goes against the aesthetic rules he thinks are valid. Bergman represented very consciously this rule-breaking attitude. He declared at the release of his film: "I don't want this film to have a comforting ending, as the producers say. I want to appear as anxious and curious as I am, and my goal is to make other people anxious and curious also."[19] Consequently, according to the rules explained in the film itself, this film is not a proper work of art. Or else it is, but then what the viewer has

18. This term of French literary theory refers to those structures where a small part of a work of art reflects the structure of the whole and as such can be considered a metaphor of it.

19. Cited by Jorn Dönner, *Ingmar Bergman* (Paris: Seghers, 1970), 27.

seen was not what it seemed: a representation of "hell on Earth." This conflict can be solved only by introducing new aesthetic norms.

The question Bergman asks in his film—over which for the first time in his career he had total auteurial control—is this: will it be possible to make films *my own way*? Bergman's first reflective work, which is also the first of its kind in postwar modern cinema, is a surprisingly clear formulation of the modernist paradox: a work of art, which is possible and impossible at the same time. It is possible, since we see it, but in terms of classical aesthetic rules attached to unquestionable moral values, it is impossible.[20] Bergman does not use the filmmaking process as a background to show how a film is made or to advertise himself as a successful auteur as Kelly or Hitchcock, but to introduce ambiguity into classical aesthetic values. This film is not about the power of cinema anymore; *it is about the doubts about the power of cinema.*

To recognize *Prison* as a truly modernist reflective film, it is important to emphasize that the self-referential gestures are achieved by two means: they are either auteurial comments (whether the auteur is represented by a voice-over or is personified in a character), or implied by narrative self-referential procedures. Subjective self-reference of the auteur and narrative self-reference are two important characteristics that cannot be found in early modern reflective forms. The former is a result of what I called the "birth of the auteur" in the cinema; the latter is an influence of twentieth-century modern literature, whose influence started to take effect in the cinema in the late 1940s. Both contributed to the emergence of the *critical* attitude in reflexive procedures. We have discussed the former; let us now turn briefly to the latter.

Reflexivity and Abstraction: Modern Cinema and the *Nouveau Roman*

Le nouveau roman, the "new novel," played a crucial role in the development of modern cinema. In the 1950s it determined some basic narrative principles in literature that were widely applied by modern cinema later in France and elsewhere.

20. This is very similar to the Magrittian negative self-reference included in his picture, "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe.*" Magritte's picture is a work of art as a realist representation of a pipe. But as a work of art, as representing a pipe according to aesthetic conventions, it should be considered as participating in the "essence" of the pipe, therefore in a certain way, it *is* a pipe. But it clearly says that it is not one, it is only a work of art. If it is not a pipe in one way or another, it cannot be an aesthetic representation of a pipe, either. Then it is not a work of art. What is it then? For an analysis of *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, see Michel Foucault, "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*," *Athaeneum* 1, no. 4 (1993): 158–159.

The connections between *nouveau roman* and modern cinema are manifold. To begin with the most salient, historical connections, two of the main auteurs of this current, Alain Robbe-Grillet and Marguerite Duras, were also exemplary auteurs of modern cinema right from the early 1960s. Robbe-Grillet was also the main theoretician of *nouveau roman*, and in his theoretical essays he consciously applied the methods developed in his literary works in his filmmaking practice. Moreover, Alain Resnais's first three films were based upon literary material written by prominent *nouveau roman* writers: *Hiroshima, My Love* (1959) by Marguerite Duras, *The Last Year in Marienbad* (1961), by Alain Robbe-Grillet, and *Muriel* (1963) by Jean Cayrol. However, the relationship between modern cinema and *nouveau roman* can be approached from a different angle as well. It can be argued that the narrative conception of *nouveau roman* was originally influenced by cinema itself.

In one of his essays written in 1954, that is, before modern cinema emerged and Robbe-Grillet turned toward cinema, Roland Barthes already noticed that Robbe-Grillet's technique of describing scenes and objects can be associated with a fundamentally cinematic vision.[21] Robbe-Grillet strictly restricts description to the visual surface of the world, which brings forward textual solutions known from the cinema. For example, when in *Les gommes* (1953) the auteur describes a fraction of space in a room viewed from the point of view of an immobile man sitting and looking out the window, and the scenery "pans" in front of the window just like in the film-viewing situation. Barthes attributes the way Robbe-Grillet handles space to the "revolution cinema brought about in the domain of visual reflexes." In Barthes's characterization, *nouveau roman* carries out a *cinematic abstraction* in literature.

Barthes is right in recognizing the cinematic origins of the way *nouveau roman* deals with the relationship between vision and description, but this is not only a simple one-way influence. *Nouveau roman* was a result of a certain phenomenological approach appearing in literature in the late 1940s, which could be called "cinematic." But the narrative principles that unfolded on these grounds in the following decade became highly influential in their turn with respect to the development of modern cinema too. *Nouveau roman* functioned as mediator or catalyst in the development of modern cinema. A certain cinematic approach was instrumental in the formation of the *nouveau roman* style but also helped it to develop cinema's *own* modernist potentials in turn. If we accept Jean-Marie Straub's opinion that "It is possible

21. Roland Barthes, "Litérature objective," in *Essaies critiques* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964).

also that cinema has invented *nouveau roman*," we must add also on the same grounds that "*nouveau roman* has invented modern cinema."[22]

Literary narration and modern cinematic form went hand in hand in the *nouveau roman* era. Godard's comment on French writer Régis Bastide illustrates how close the interaction between literature and cinema was in this period: "The cinema manages to express things that he thought were specific to the domain of literature exclusively, and the problems that he faced as a writer had been all resolved by cinema without even having to be addressed."[23] Just like Pierre Kast, who sees the importance of *Hiroshima, My Love* in that problems of the novel are dealt with in the cinema: "We have seen many films using the compositional laws of the novel. *Hiroshima* goes farther than that. We are at the essence of literary narration itself."[24] It is remarkable that Kast does not mention the narration of cinema, but he speaks about literary narration, which shows that the two were regarded as one and the same to the point that the "essence" of literary narration could be discovered by Kast in a film.

The main emphasis of Barthes's comments is on the abstract character of Robbe-Grillet's style. Most aspects of this style may be reduced to one basic operation. Robbe-Grillet extracts a traditional humanistic approach from description of space and character representation:

> He teaches to see the world not through the eyes of the confessor, the doctor, or God (all meaningful hypotheses of the classical novelist), but through the eyes of a man who walks in the city with no other horizon than the spectacle, with no other power than those of his eyes.[25]

In other words, Robbe-Grillet's writing is a result of a conscious reduction of the relationship between man and the environment to an immediate visual contact. Isolation of space segments, spatialization and circularity of time, and lack of psychological description are all results of the fact that Robbe-Grillet denies representation from anything that has no immediate optical relevance. All that appears in Robbe-Grillet's universe has a strict optical presence, and nothing but that. This is the main reason for using the cinematic reference. This radical reductionism creates a homogeneous spatial surface, the only dimension in which objects and humans are described. That is why the most crucial aspect of his style is the way he handles

22. Jean-Marie Straub in "Questions aux romanciers ayant écrit pour le cinéma," *Cahiers du cinéma* 185 (December 1966): 123–124.

23. In Domarchi et al., "Hiroshima, notre amour," 9.

24. Ibid.

25. Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman*, 43.

description. The accuracy of Robbe-Grillet's description is not that of a realist auteur. Robbe-Grillet's description is not implicative: nothing is meant to be suggested by the object described other than what is optically given. As Barthes puts it, "Robbe-Grillet's writing is without alibis, it has neither thickness nor depth: it remains on the surface of the object and moves on this surface without privileging this or that quality: this is the opposite of poetic writing." Barthes comes to the conclusion that the roots of this way of writing is based on a "new structure of matter and movement: it is analogous neither to the Freudian, nor to the Newtonian universe; one has to think rather to a mental complex stemming from contemporary science and art such as new physics and cinema."[26]

In his short essays written between 1955 and 1963[27] Robbe-Grillet himself developed the main theoretical facets of *nouveau roman.* Not surprisingly, he theorizes along the same lines as Barthes, however his own approach emphasizes the *reflexive* aspects of his own writing style. Putting Robbe-Grillet's essays and Barthes's critical impressions side by side, the double facet of the *nouveau roman* narrative technique and style (abstraction and reflexivity) is striking.

Robbe-Grillet discusses storytelling with reflexivity as the focus. Robbe-Grillet distinguishes between storytelling and writing (*écriture*). He argues that the new novel inverts the priority between storytelling and the way of writing in the novel. He predicts that stories will never disappear from novels, but the way they are told will be essentially different from traditional narrative. Conventions of storytelling help the readers recognize a "reality" behind what they read. But art, Robbe-Grillet argues, is not the imitation of some real-life model; on the contrary, art is pure invention. In other words, literature is *writing without a model* where the text itself becomes independent of any image referring to a background reality. In the new novel "writing," that is, the original way and the new ways that narrative information is organized by an auteur, is primordial, and representation has no importance whatsoever. Thus, storytelling is only a secondary function of *écriture.* Everything in the novel is an invention of the writer, and thus all stories appear as a creation of fantasy. Modern novels take account of this and therefore invention, imagination, and different forms of mental processes become the ultimate subject matter of the plot. The central element of the novel is not the story it tells, but the mental processes used for creating the text telling this story. "To narrate has become clearly impossible," says Robbe-Grillet. What

26. Barthes, *Oeuvres completes*, quotations on 33, 42.

27. Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman*, 11.

that means, however, is not the total lack of an anecdote, but "the lack of certitude, tranquility and innocence from the anecdote,"[28] in other words, the lack of the direct and obvious relationship between model and representation. The *nouveau roman* writer feels that the certainty and the unity of the stories cannot be reproduced any longer. The writer has to take a point of view, which is that of an exterior observer rather than a knowledgeable analyzer. Therefore storytelling depends on the way it is written rather than on the story it tells and the model in reality it seeks to represent. There is no longer a safe background behind the anecdote to be the source of its coherence. Coherence is provided by *écriture*, writing. The different contradictory elements of stories can fit in a coherent whole only in the dimension of *écriture*. This coherent whole is the way the auteur integrates different techniques. The modern novel is fundamentally reflexive because the only referent of its plot elements is the structure it is written into.

It is easy to notice the parallelism between the central importance attributed to *écriture* and the eminence of the mise-en-scène declared by the critics of the *Cahiers* in the same period of the mid-1950s. The two categories were born along the same lines of ideas in cinema and literature. They refer to a textual or cinematic imprint of the auteur's mental activity, translated into an arrangement of objects or beings in a way that is characteristic of an individual auteur across different works of her own. In neither case is storytelling denied, and in both cases the auteurial and reflexive intervention into conventions of genre is emphasized. Clearly Robbe-Grillet did not have to stress the question of the identity of the auteur, whereas for Truffaut this was the main issue. In "auteur politics" according to Truffaut, mise-en-scène is the dimension in which the different elements of the film are organized, and it is the only dimension where an auteur's own personality can manifest itself.

Next to reflexive storytelling the other important aspect of *nouveau roman* concerns the role of the characters. According to the traditional rules of the genre the characters of a novel have to be concrete individuals with proper names, life stories, and professions as well as psychological traits. What they do will be determined by these characteristics. Robbe-Grillet claims that in modern literature characters have to be detached from their traditional social and cultural determinations. Why not choose someone, asks Robbe-Grillet, who falls out of some or all of these categories: an idiot, an abandoned child, someone who does nothing and wants nothing in life? For novels with well-written characters cannot invent anything new. They present only prefabricated puppets. This kind of novel belongs to the past,

28. Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman*, quotations on 31, 32.

where the apology of the individual prevailed. The reason for this is a fundamental uncertainty:

> Our world today is less certain of itself. It is more modest, perhaps, because it has renounced the omnipotence of the personality, but also more ambitious, because it looks beyond the personality. The exclusive cult of the "human" ceded its place to a more general and less anthropocentric vision. The novel seems to stagger as it has lost its best support, the hero.[29]

One can well recognize these principles of character representation in the theory of the "models" of Robert Bresson developed at the same time between 1950 and 1958.[30] This conception is in perfect harmony with what Robbe-Grillet writes with regard to the *nouveau roman:* characters with no psychological motivation, no personal background, no history, no family, no names, and no feelings or motivation to express.

The third aspect we have to mention concerns the use of time. Robbe-Grillet explains his ideas about the formation of time in modern narrative in a short essay written in 1963, after having already completed a film of his own. In this essay he no longer differentiates between narration in the modern novel and in modern cinema. He considers the two as belonging to one and the same narrative universe, just as it might have appeared to him, being one of the most important auteurs bridging the gap between the two. He takes his examples and references alternatively from literature and from cinema, but he considers cinema as a medium that is more capable of realizing the principles of modern narrative than literature. Cinema's attraction for modern writers hides in the potentials of cinema "on the domain of subjectivity and the imaginary." Cinema can totally suppress the distinction between reality and imagination. The reason for this is that film places everything in present tense and thus eliminates objective time.

> The universe, in which the whole film is placed, is characteristically one of a perpetual present that makes it impossible to refer to memory. This is a world without a past, self-sufficient in each moment and effacing itself step by step. . . . There can be no reality beyond the images we see and the words we hear. Thus, the duration of the modern work of art is in no way a summary, a condensation of a more extensive and "more real" duration, that of an anecdote, of a narrated story. On the contrary, there is an absolute identity between the two durations."[31]

29. Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman*, 28.
30. Robert Bresson, *Notes sur le cinématographe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
31. Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman*, 128, 131.

In other words, modern narrative is not representing a time span allegedly "real," or at least independent from the time experience as the result of the narrative process. The only time a modern narrative treats is the time experience of the viewer while watching the film or reading the novel. This is the way modern cinema can efface all distinction between true and false, past and present, real and imaginary. Modern film creates mental structures entirely deprived of time as an independent process from narration. The only temporality that exists in modern cinema is related to the film's *own time*, which is why, Robbe-Grillet claims, the only important character in the film is the spectator. "It is *in the spectator's mind* that the story *imagined by the spectator* develops." The story in a narrative has no reality other than the mere process of narration. The only reference of modern narrative is narration itself. For Robbe-Grillet the "protagonist of modern narratives is time."[32] But this is a time "without temporality," a circular, spatial, and contradictory time. Robbe-Grillet argues that time is not the dimension of the self-fulfilling destiny of a person's life anymore; time is independent from represented action or events.[33] Robbe-Grillet's references are his own films, of course, as well as the one written for Alain Resnais, *Last Year at Marienbad.* As I will argue below when discussing modern film forms in greater detail, we may accept Robbe-Grillet's views about modern narration as valid with regard to other films as well that do not have as close a relationship with *nouveau roman.* What is more, the self-conscious split between the fictive time of narration and the empirical time of film viewing is one of the most fundamental procedures of modern cinema along which lines we will be able to make important distinctions.

32. Robbe-Grillet, *Pour un nouveau roman,* quotations on 132, 133.

33. Here we can see that the Deleuzeian conception of modern cinema in many respects is deeply rooted in Robbe-Grillet's ideas: for Deleuze, the essence of modern cinema is also the disconnection of time and physical action. Deleuze argues that this is how the "direct image of time" can appear in cinema.

:13:
The Return of the Theatrical

The fight against the theatrical influence had been one of art filmmakers' oldest campaigns in their drive to achieve artistic independence. The "genuine film artist" considered theatricality in the cinema to be the antithesis of cinema's own aesthetic qualities.[1] There were, however, two main reasons why theater could not be entirely eliminated from the cinema, and why postwar modernism had to face theatricality again.

One obvious reason for the return of theatricality was the appearance of synchronic sound. The most obvious artistic reference for staging talking actors was theater. Many writers saw a big danger in the "return" of theater. We can read in *Close Up* in 1928 the concern of Jean Lenauer: "When, a few months ago, people began to battle over the talking film, I was frankly hostile and tried to combat it to the limit of my power. . . . I foresaw a horrible deformation, a mere degradation, with the added words returning to the worst *theater*."[2] Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov predicted the same danger: "This first period of sensations will not prejudice the development of the new art, but there will be a terrible second

1. Theoretical reflections opposing theater and cinema and reclaiming the independence of cinema go back as early as 1908, when the success of the filmed theater, named *Film d'art*, with *L'Assasinat du Duc de Guise*, raised this question seriously for the first time. The same year the daily newspaper *Le Figaro* conducted a poll asking critics and writers whether they thought that with the filmed theater the cinema had come to its apogee. Sacha Guitry's answer was, "I think that the cinema has already passed its apogee." Renée Jeanne and Charles Ford, *Le cinéma et la presse, 1895–1960* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1961), 37–41.

2. Cited in *Close Up, 1927–1933: Cinema and Modernism*, ed. James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 87.

period, which will come with the fading of the first realization of new practical possibilities, and in its place established an epoch of automatic utilization for 'high cultural dramas' and other photographic performances of the theatrical nature."[3] Dreyer remarked in 1933 that "the talking film presents itself like a theater piece in concentrated form."[4] This helped theatrical adaptations appear, but, claims Dreyer, that is exactly why one has to pay much attention to create the real characteristics of a sound film: use of real locations, acting, diction close to real-life, and abbreviated dialogues.

The most immediate objection against sound was that the talking scenes would be a drag on the action.[5] Meyerhold thought that "the dialogue retheatricalizes the cinema slowing down the pace of actions."[6] In fact, real-time speech in film had a spectacular effect on staging, acting, and dramatizing. In silent cinema a speaking character had no visual relevance since the audience could not hear what the character said. What did have visual relevance was the expressive quality of the speaking character's gestures following the speech, as well as other characters' emotional response to what was said, which is why close-ups were typically made not of speaking but of acting or reacting characters or those expressing emotions, while speaking characters were typically staged in medium or medium-long shots. Dialogue scenes were much shorter than in sound films, since time was necessary not for grasping the intellectual content of the dialogues but for understanding their emotional content. Actors said the essence of what they had to tell, and most of the psychological content of a dialogue scene was acted. Body language was used more often to express thoughts, and the flux of information was most often carried by images of different written media, such as newspapers, letters, notes, or simple subtitles. Logic of visual expression prevailed over the logic of the unfolding dramatic situation in time. All that changed with synchronic sound. Dramatic time became subjected not solely to the function of expression but also to the psychological mechanisms of verbal communication. The time necessary to understand and to follow verbal dialogues became an important factor of staging. Not only individual shots became longer in the sound period, but complete scenes

3. Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin, and Grigori Alexandrov, "The Sound Film: A Statement," *Close Up* 3, no. 4 (October 1928): 10–13, reprinted in *Close Up, 1927–1933*, 83–84.

4. Dreyer, "The Real Talking Film," 54.

5. Ernest Betts, "Why 'Talkies' Are Unsound," *Close Up* 4, no. 4 (April 1929), reprinted in *Close Up, 1927–1933*, 89–90.

6. Cited in Claudine Amiard-Chevral, *Théâtre et cinéma années vingt: Une quête de la modernité* (Lausanne: L'Âge d'Homme, 1990), 1: 261.

containing dialogues as well, whether or not they consisted of shorter or longer takes.[7]

The increased length of dialogue scenes was due to the fact that dialogues had to be shown in real time, but also, and more important, in the instance of a realist dialogue scene, a lot of acting and dialogue elements had to be added in order to create psychological credibility. Scenes in a silent film containing dialogues would very seldom run over one minute including titles (which means that without the titles they are even shorter), whereas in a talking film very few dialogue scenes run less than one minute.

Sound dialogues did not revolutionize narrative composition but instead modified the dramatic structure sufficiently so that rethinking the relationship between theater and cinema became necessary. The theoretical reaction to this process followed shortly. Already in 1951 André Bazin raised the idea of reconsidering the relation between film and theater. He observed that in the cinema of the late thirties and forties sound filmmakers did not want to distinguish their methods from those of the theater as much as silent filmmakers had done. He goes as far as to rehabilitate the "filmed theater" as a genre, which, in his view, will help to further develop cinema's own specificity. And the main reason of this phenomenon, according to Bazin is precisely the logic of the acoustic text.

> Not long ago the primary concern of filmmakers was to conceal the theatrical origin of the model and to adapt and dissolve it into the cinema. It appears that nowadays the filmmaker not only abandons this practice but sometimes he even wants to emphasize the theatrical character of his film. It could not be otherwise from the moment when the essence of the text is respected. . . . [The text] determines the modes and the style of the representation; it has already the potential of the theater.[8]

The acoustic text draws the cinematic "mise en scène" toward theater. From this Bazin predicts the revival of theatrical forms in the cinema and even the modernization of theater by the cinema: "Now that the screen has learned to accept other kinds of theater than the comic, one cannot help thinking that cinema will be able to renovate theater by unfolding some of its scenic potentials."[9]

7. According to David Bordwell, the average length of takes in the middle of the silent period was around five or six seconds, while at the beginning of the sound era it was close to eleven seconds. *Classical Hollywood Cinema*, 304.

8. André Bazin, "Théatre et cinéma," in *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* (Paris: Éd. du Cerf. 1975), 138.

9. Bazin, "Théatre et cinéma," 176.

Theatrical adaptations abounded in the forties and fifties. Some very classical adaptations were created, such as the Shakespeare series played and directed by Laurence Olivier: *Henri V* (1946), *Hamlet* (1948), and *Richard III* (1955). Modern plays of very different sorts also found their way to cinema at this period in films such as William Wyler's *The Little Foxes* (1941, from Lillian Hellman's play), Alf Sjöberg's *Miss Julie* (1951, from August Strindberg's play), Peter Brook's *The Beggar's Opera* (1953, from Bertolt Brecht's play), and after a forgotten adaptation of Kaj Munk's *Ordet* by Gustav Molander in 1943, Dreyer turned it into his 1954 masterpiece. Even pieces of the contemporary theater were adapted to cinema, like the existentialist plays of Sartre, such as *Dirty Hands* (1951, Fernand Rivers and Simone Berriau), *The Respectful Prostitute* (1952, Charles Brabant and Marcel Pagliero), and *No Exit* (1954, Jacqueline Audry).

But the series of classical adaptations was only the beginning of a real aesthetic convergence between theater, cinema, and literature taking place during the fifties. Already in the forties many well-known established writers, playwrights, and theatrical directors started in one way or another working in film, like Jean Cocteau, Samuel Beckett, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Jacques Prévert, Peter Brook, John Osborn, Tony Richardson, and Harold Pinter, just to name a few. In the middle of the fifties the renewal of the English cinema grew out of the theater. In Sweden all the important filmmakers who took part in the modernization of Swedish cinema had a very strong theater background: Alf Sjöberg and Ingmar Bergman, just like their precursors, Mauritz Stiller and Victor Sjöström, were filmmakers as much as stage directors throughout their careers, and Vilgot Sjöman worked in theater for more than ten years before he started filmmaking.

Theater per se was no longer regarded as aesthetically destructive for cinema. Theatricality already had a different meaning from what it has had twenty years earlier, and it did not represent the kind of theatricality artists of the silent film struggled against. Sound was only one factor of this new phenomenon. Theater meant also *abstraction* for postwar filmmakers, the other important reason why theatrical influence reappeared in the postwar period.

Abstract Drama

The specific relationship between postwar modern cinema and theater was not without antecedent. On the contrary, cinematic modernism has a strong theatrical tradition going back to the early twenties, that is, to the very beginning of modernism in cinema. Expressionist cinema is at the starting

point of this relationship. The acting, scenic design, and lighting techniques in the expressionist film were directly inherited from expressionist theater. Expressionist film style was for the most part gradually developed in Austrian theater director Max Reinhardt's theater starting from the late 1900s. The main stage designers working in expressionist cinema doubled as painters working for theater, and most of the big expressionist actors, like Paul Wegener, Konrad Veidt, Ernst Lubitsch, or Emil Jannings, worked with Reinhardt before working in the cinema. These direct and indirect relations between theater and cinema created the first modernist movement in the cinema.

It was not naturalist theater that influenced early modernist cinema. The cooperation between theater and cinema could work out well in the early twenties precisely because of a certain convergence that distinguished expressionist theater from traditional theatrical naturalism. Modern theater's extreme abstraction and symbolism made expressionist theatrical devices suitable for cinematic adoption in the first modernist period. The situation was very similar in the fifties. It was a kind of abstraction that modern postwar cinema was looking for in theater. Moreover, one can argue that the fashion of expressionist lighting in the forties and fifties, especially in England and in American film noir, had much to do with the return of theatricality, which can be underpinned by referring to some auteurs' parallel activities in cinema and theater, such as, and most importantly, Orson Welles, who made two classical drama adaptations in this period and was one of the most conscious users of expressionist staging and lighting. And we can see a direct connection between expressionist visual elements, especially lighting and depth staging, and the theatrical background in the British "free cinema" movement at the end of the fifties.

Still, expressionist theater was no longer fashionable, and to the extent that one can speak of a certain expressionism in postwar cinema, one must add that this expressionism had already its independent, autonomous cinematic source in early expressionist cinema. We have to find theatrical abstraction of postwar sound cinema someplace else. Dreyer gives us some indications:

> The real talking film must give the impression that a film photographer, equipped with camera and microphone, has sneaked unseen into one of the homes in the town just as some kind of a drama is taking place within the family. Hidden under his cloak of invisibility, he snaps up the most important scenes of the drama and disappears as silently as he came.[10]

10. Dreyer, "The Real Talking Film."

Dreyer's text touches upon the essence of theatricality in postwar cinema: *representation of intensive dramatic scenes taking place in a closed environment*. This was the kind of theatricality in the sense of staging according to intensive verbalized drama and psychological realism. What sound made possible was precisely the enhancement of and concentration on the dramatic situation in film. For Dreyer, reality counted as much as it gave authenticity to the drama, but he insisted that the drama must be at the center.

René Prédal remarked upon the same thing regarding the theatrical style of French films in the fifties, and this could be generalized for most dramatic adaptations of the period. "One should rather speak of the theatrical *situation*: a few characters, reduced spaces, and a lot of dialogues."[11] This is the kind of reductionism or aesthetic abstraction that theatricality mainly meant for postwar cinema: the reduction of stories to intensive abstract dramatic situations taking place within limited spaces and played by a reduced number of characters. Theatricality became a form of abstraction for sound cinema, a mode of focusing on psychological drama in an isolated way, extracting it from extensive representation of the larger environment. That is why this kind of theatricality remains an essential part of postwar modernism in spite of the strong influence of neorealism and the documentary.

A typical version of this kind of abstraction could be found in the Strindbergian and the Sartrian theater. This is what I called earlier the *closed-situation drama*, in which the dramatic abstraction occurs in creating a situation in which the characters are gathered in a closed space, thereby creating a psychological laboratory situation where the dramatic action consists of the interaction of different behavioral patterns as reactions to the given situation. This sort of reduced model situation will be one of the preferred dramatic forms modern cinema will develop in the sixties.

In the final analysis the return to theatricality encoded in the synchronic sound film could become a productive feature for late modern cinema because it helped to approach and intensify abstract dramaturgy, and especially in the form of the contemporary existentialist "closed-situation drama." The conscious use of theatrical forms engendered one of the main styles of the second period of modernism.

11. René Prédal, *50 années de cinéma français* (Paris: Nathan, 1996), 98.

: 14 :

The Destabilization of the Fabula

There is a wide consensus among filmmakers and theorists that one of the most important phenomena in the postwar period is the spread of stories fusing human acts, represented in narratives, with the representation of mental processes, or of stories of human acts that develop into tales about pure mental processes. This process, especially in French film criticism from Alexandre Astruc to Gilles Deleuze, is often considered as the main trend of modern cinema's development. Even if, following the arguments developed in previous chapters, it is not considered the "essence" of cinema, the importance of this phenomenon cannot be overestimated. This is how cinema became widely accepted as a "serious" art, and which helped reinforce art-film institutions from the mid-fifties onwards and make widespread the art-film industry and distribution circuits. What is more, this is what turned classical narrative patterns into more flexible structures as far as time and space continuity is concerned, which explains the popularity of films by David Lynch or Quentin Tarantino in the eighties and nineties with their highly sophisticated narrative procedures. Although the principles of modern film narration did not replace classical principles, modernist principles became a sort of parallel norm considerably influencing the development of audio-visual culture even after the decline of modernism as a mainstream artistic practice.

Subjectivity in modern narrative means that conventional narrative patterns, which created solid interpretative schemes, dissolve before such narrative maneuvers, which weaken the referential relationship between the world represented in the story and the empirical world. Formal techniques and devices convey the meanings that refer to an abstract system of reference rather than to the "real world." Modern reflexivity is a consequence and a spe-

cial product of narrative subjectivity whereby everything that happens in the narrative is presented as a consequence of the art making or of the narrative procedure itself, rather than of the logic of the empirical world. Nevertheless, narrative subjectivity is not always self-referential. The narrative apparatus is only one system of reference used by subjective narratives. Another referential system, used mainly in surrealist and avant-garde films, is the unconscious; yet another one widely used by modern films is a set of existential limit situations in their pure, abstract form. Both methods of abstract narratives result in the extreme in that the story the plot refers to is rendered considerably uncertain or blurred or entirely eliminated. There are several techniques to accomplish this, most of which appear in the fifties, which are not dominant factors of storytelling, except in some interesting cases, but are special devices added to traditional narrative structures. Most often they involve solutions blurring the boundary between dream, imagination, vision, and reality, or making the temporal or spatial location of certain events uncertain, like in Cocteau's *Orpheus* (1949). In technical terms this is brought about by simply suppressing the visual indication of the change of time span or mental status (like superimposition, blurring the image, or fading in).

Crime and mystery stories are particularly well adapted to experimenting with narrative solutions that aim at confusing the viewer. Investigation is the model pattern action for stories showing someone lost in the midst of indeterminate time and space coordinates, whether this has to do with crime, memory, imagination, or seduction. That is why the investigation pattern may dominate even the most esoteric European modernist art films. Later in this chapter I will analyze some aspects of the American film noir genre, which points in this direction by opening up the rational motivation chain of the story. The confusion this causes contributes to the film historical process of adopting highly ambiguous fabula constructions. The main tendency appearing in the late forties is to create narratives that question the absolute value of the *fabula*, in other words, narratives that leave a considerable amount of freedom for the spectator to construct a consistent story—in other words, to make the fabula appear as a product of subjective imagination. I will discuss here the formal traits appearing in this period that emphasize subjectivity in narration.

Voice-Over Narration

The first manifestation of this tendency is the spread of the postwar fashion of a simple technical device: the voice-over narration, especially in French and American cinema. This is a very simple device, which places a reflexive

level between visual narration and the story. In American cinema this solution was fashionable mainly in the type of films called *film noir.* In French cinema it is mainly the adaptations of "serious" literary material that introduce voice-over narration, but we find voice-over narration in other films too, like Clément's *The Battle of the Rails* (1946), or in various other sectors of postwar European cinema, like Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949), Bergman's *Prison* (1948), or in Rossellini's *Paisan* (1946), just to mention a few.

This technique places a mediator between the empirical world and the narrative universe. The first-order reference of the narrative is the narrator-subject and not the empirical world. This means that the narrative truth is related to reality only through the subjectivity of the narrator's text. Meaning is conveyed not only by the relationship between narrative and empirical reality, but also by the relationship between narrator text and narrative. There enters a possibility of a gap between the two, and having this gap convey information. Most of these films do not use this possibility of opposing narrative and narrator information, but many of them use voice-over narration to present a certain amount of subjectivity by giving the voice a "personality." In *Le silence de la mer* by Jean-Pierre Melville (1949), adapted from a Vercors novel, one of the protagonists is virtually doubled by the fact that he tells all his thoughts in voice-over while he never speaks on-screen. A narrator's voice always functions as a stable or unquestionable point of reference in interpreting narrative information. In other words, inserting a narrative voice makes it possible for the filmmaker to handle time order and causal explanations more freely than in a structure where the viewer has to find out every bit of information only by following the action unfolding on the screen. Complicated psychic motivations can be explained merely by recounting them by a voice-over, whereas without it, whole stories would be necessary to make them clear.

We can consider voice-over narration as the manifestation of the need for deepening the psychological and intellectual content of the narrative, and at the same time, as the first sign of the consciousness in cinema that narrative truthfulness is dependent on subjective presentation. This solution will remain highly fashionable throughout the late modern period.

The Dissolution of Classical Narrative: Film Noir and Modernism

Film noir can be considered a transitional step between classical and modern cinema because it breaks up classical narrative logic while maintaining classical narrative structures. It makes the narrative development dependent on incalculable emotional or psychic shifts of the hero. This is one way

of subjectivizing narration. That is exactly what French new wave critics turned directors appreciated. In Claude Chabrol's opinion, film noir "spiritualizes" or "philosophizes" crime stories:

> In these films, there is no question of renovating a genre by pushing its limits or intellectualizing it in any way. . . . One understands easily, however, that these films represented essential steps in the peaceful struggle for the liberation of the genre and the dismantling of its forms: they were not examples, but they were stimulants. . . . All these auteurs share a common point: they no longer consider the crime or whatever criminal element as a dramatic situation that yields to more or less skillful variations, but they perceived it from an ontological (Ray, Losey, Dassin) or metaphysical (Welles, Hitchcock) point of view.[1]

The transitional character of film noir is manifest also in concrete film historical phenomena. Many great modern auteurs constructed their films on film noir structure at the beginning of their careers: Visconti's first film was an adaptation of *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, Antonioni's first film, *Story of a Love Affair,* is of a film noir structure, Godard's *Breathless* as well as Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player* (both made in 1960) are reflections on, and in the case of Truffaut, a parody of film noir. In all of these films one can see the same double objective: to create an exciting, strong narrative framework and fill it up with emotional and passionate elements of a different nature than the logic of the narrative frame. The film noir structure did not renew classical narrative; it revealed instead a possible direction for its dismantling. I will discuss film noir here from the perspective of how it prepared the way for modern film narration.

The modernist idea that the narrative should serve merely as a frame that is filled in with expressive, emotional, or intellectual material, the intensity of which is more important than the rational consistency of the narrative, proved to be a viable solution in film noir within classical narrative patterns. Extremely fast narratives, plots filled up with sudden turns virtually impossible to follow at first glance and sometimes impossible to reconstruct at all, plots that work by virtue of their emotional charge and not by rational motivation, provide, on the one hand, the freedom to handle classical narrative patterns, and on the other, prepare the ground for patterns of the free use of classical narration. The irrational shift in the plot, which is always connected to a (not always fatal) woman provides a good narrative frame for

1. Claude Chabrol, "Evolution du film policier," *Cahiers du cinéma* 54 (Christmas 1955): 27–33.

modern directors to play within two dimensions at the same time, a rational and an irrational one, and makes it possible to remain within a frame of classical narrative and at the same time to divorce situation and reaction by interposing irrational mental processes.

Fabula Alternatives: Hitchcock

Another slightly more complicated procedure of destabilizing and subjectivizing the fabula can be found in certain Alfred Hitchcock films. This procedure involves diverting the spectator's attention from clues that could point to the direction of the main story line the film will follow, which causes the extraordinary fluidity of the expository part of some of his films. The reason why (especially French) modern filmmakers made Hitchcock one of their idols was mainly his ability to involve, activate, and play with the spectator's intellectual participation, and maintain attention without developing an apparent story line.[2] This is not true for all Hitchcock films, of course. Some of them, like *Rope* (1948), for example, start right with the main action or have a reasonably short exposition, like *North by Northwest* (1959). Other films, relatively early ones like *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) or *Spellbound* (1945) but especially the later masterpieces from the modern period, like *Psycho* (1960) and *The Birds* (1963), clearly show this virtue of stretching the exposition and diverting the spectator's attention. The conscious use of this device is evident when comparing the original *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) with its remake (1956): in the remake the exposition before the killing is three times as long as in the original. It is filled with attention-diverting scenes like the play on the cushions of the Arabic restaurant or the long conversation in the bazaar about the "financial value" of different illnesses.

In Hollywood crime films and thrillers the storyboard can never be significantly fluid. But the conscious play with the spectator's attention,[3] the diversionary techniques may result in the spectator constrained to work simultaneously with radically different fabula alternatives, all of which may well remain ambiguous. In *North by Northwest*, for example, no clear solution is given as to how the heroes were able to escape out of their desperate

2. See Godard's first article (under the name of Hans Lucas) on Hitchcock defending him against accusations that he doesn't develop a theme (*sujet*) in *Strangers on a Train*. "Suprématie du sujet (Strangers on a Train)," *Cahiers du cinéma* 10 (1952): 59–61.

3. About the "play with the viewer," see François Truffaut, *Hitchcock* (Paris: Éditions Lafont, 1967).

situation of hanging down from a cliff. The last scene simply shows them alive in a train, and the connection between the two scenes is an ironic metamorphosis of the gesture of the man pulling the woman upwards: it starts as a movement of pulling her up the cliff and ends up as a movement of pulling her up into the bed in the train. The rational plot motivation is replaced by editing. The viewer is free to replace whatever solution she finds appropriate. We must assume that "somehow" they escaped, but the narrative leaves an enormous gap, which calls into question the rationality of the whole story. In retrospect this gap raises the question of whether the whole story was but a nightmare. None of the possible interpretations entirely cohere: if the story was real, how on earth could they escape from falling down from the cliff; if it was a nightmare, how on earth did he get on the train, and who is this woman anyway? This solution points toward modernist cinema's tendency to hide spectacular action in the plot and to call attention to this hiding by means of editing.

What attracted young critics who would go on to become modern filmmakers—nicknamed by André Bazin "hitchcocko-hawksiens"[4]—to Hitchcock's art was less its radicalism in destabilizing classical narrative rules than his conscious and reflective use of all means of introversion of narrative motivation. The same reason that drove them to choose Hitchcock drew them to Rossellini among other neorealist filmmakers, and in particular, his concise and coherent narration with deep psychological motivation elevating the characters beyond the surface of everyday rationality and morality. They saw in this auteurial attitude the appearance of a kind of holistic conception: surface realism coupled with metaphysical depth in a conscious and tight narrative, which revealed the personality of the "auteur." But while in the case of Rossellini no one had much difficulty relating this to a metaphysical vision, in the case of Hitchcock most fellow film critics as well as some filmmakers saw impermissible exaggeration.[5] Basically, what the defenders of Hitchcock noticed was not debated: Hitchcock creates "holes" in the rational motivation chain by radically withholding or entirely suppressing the spectator's knowledge about what is happening and why, leav-

4. This was a nickname given by Bazin to the group of critics elevating Hawks and Hitchcock above other American auteurs. The group included Rohmer, Rivette, Chabrol, Truffaut, and Godard.

5. French film critic Adonis Kyrou writes in 1957 that Hitchcock "becomes a piece of canvas on which people embroider theories." And Denis Marion says in 1954: "If the content of the films of Hitchcock were as rich as Mr. Schérer, Chabrol, Domarchi, and Truffaut pretend, they wouldn't be the first nor the only ones to notice that." Cited by Baecque, *Les cahiers du cinéma*, 1: 191, 1: 197.

ing much space for the spectator for guessing. The question was whether it was appropriate to fill in these gaps with the help of metaphysical claims. The defenders of Hitchcock said yes, his detractors esteemed that those gaps were in fact empty holes, and suspense was only a simple tool of audience manipulation void of any deeper sense. This choice made the difference between recognizing Hitchcock as a skillful master, on the one hand, and as a great visionary or metaphysical auteur, on the other.[6]

In any case, one thing is certain: Hitchcock inspired more than one modern auteur to find a way to surpass traditional continuous narration. Another thing is also certain, however: Hitchcock did not become a model or start any trends in modernism. There is no Hitchcock style or form in modern cinema. He contributed largely to the development and refinement of the thriller genre by his very sophisticated psychological stories and by introducing different techniques of suspense, but he never abandoned coherent and linear narrative structures, nor did he ever go as far as leaving a significantly large amount of narrative information unexplained or ambiguous.

In some films, however, Hitchcock got close to some form of modernism. For example, one may see in *Rear Window* (1954) a self-reflexive metaphor of moviegoing voyeurism, Jeff representing the inactive spectator who tries to construct a story by watching. However, at the end Jeff gets into real trouble because of his behavior, and Hitchcock breaks the barrier between "film" and "spectator," which destroys the metaphor. He brings the whole symbolic dimension of the story down to sheer physical reality. In other words, Jeff's situation is somewhat *like* the movie spectator's situation in some respects, it is therefore a partial *comparison*, and falls short of self-reflexive metaphorical identification. Very similar is the case of *The Birds*. It is here that Hitchcock gets the closest to the uncertainty of modern art-film narration based on symbolic existential situations and lacking clear explanations and motivations. Again the situation in *The Birds* falls short of this: the mysterious bird attack remains inexplicable not only on a concrete level, but also on the symbolic level. It simply appears as an incomprehensible natural disaster like a flood, a hurricane, or an eruption

6. Probably the most devoted follower of the thesis that Hitchcock is a metaphysical, or a religious, auteur is Jean Douchet, who has written a whole book in which he tries to understand the idea of suspense deduced from esoterism and from religious belief. He tries to catalog different types of suspense according to their religious and symbolic meanings. Jean Douchet, *Alfred Hitchcock* (1967; Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1999).

of a volcano. There is no explicable existential situation or any metaphysical dimension to be identified behind it.

Alternative Subjective Narration: *Rashomon*

The film in which all the conclusions of separating the narrator's voice from visual narration are reached without touching modern reflexivity is Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950),[7] in which a story is narrated by the three protagonists and by a witness of a murder—the killer, the victim, the victim's wife, and a woodcutter, respectively. No other information from an "independent source" is available to the viewer.[8] There is no coherent way of guessing in the film what has really happened, the viewer has to face the fact that a considerable part of the fabula exists only in the form of incompatible versions, and not as a coherent whole. This film makes clear that the construction of stories is dependent on the subjective intentions of the respective narrators and what we can infer from what is told is not what took place in reality but how the witness-narrators wish things to have happened and how they want us to see it. The heart of this film contains the deepest principles of storytelling in that the film emphasizes, on the one hand, the close interaction between the narrator and the listener/viewer, and on the other, the ultimate constructedness of all stories. Kurosawa stages the interrogation scenes so that the witnesses face the camera (without talking to the camera though) as if the audience had the seat of the judge, which is why we don't hear the voice of the judge, only the answers of the interrogated. The staging of the interrogation scenes suggests very strongly that assessing the veracity of a story is always a question of morality as much as a question of facts, especially when we are unable to clarify these facts.

Rashomon, however, is not a reflexive narrative. First, it concerns narration as such, and not film narration specifically. Second, the whole question about the relativity of facts in narration is approached from a moral point of view and commented upon as a result of an existential limit situation and not as something proper to art or narration. *Rashomon* is a strong case of subjective narration in that it disconnects its narrative material from any

7. Although not a European film, due to its presentation at the Cannes Film Festival, it had considerable influence on European filmmakers and critics. European critics discovered Japanese cinema through *Rashomon* in the fifties. Throughout the sixties *Rashomon* remained a major reference for modernist art cinema.

8. Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* in the same year also uses the "dead man as a narrator" device.

reference to a specific historical or social reality and connects it to a general moral condition.[9] The reference of this plot is a purely moral universe commented on and symbolized by the scenes of the frame story. Everything that happens in this frame is a verbal and visual comment on the story narrated by the characters. The characters do not have an independent personal universe, and the only event taking place in the frame story is that they find a baby in the ruins, which the woodcutter declares that he will take care of. This is also a symbolic commentary on the main story: where everything is uncertain, everybody lies, and no one can be trusted, the gesture of taking care of an abandoned baby is the only authentically unselfish act. This is the only stable value that an unambiguous story can be constructed upon. Therefore, this is the only element in the film that points out of the relativity of narration, and the only stable point for the viewer to construct a *fabula*, although this story is not narrated in the film; whereas nothing is really certain enough for a stable *fabula* construction in what is in fact narrated. This is why the relativity and ambiguity of the main story are not associated with the essential nature of narration or art; it is considered instead a consequence of a corrupt moral universe. In *Rashomon* narration is considered problematic not because of the problematic nature of narration but because of an extreme existential situation where everybody lies and is selfish. And when an unselfish act emerges, narration becomes credible and unambiguous. *Rashomon*'s frame story is not reflecting the main story; it rather shows a way out of the moral corruption that makes unambiguous storytelling impossible. *Rashomon* is not part of modernism but creates the first example of a subjective narrative structure where the story exists only in alternative fabula options, which will be a very important solution in modern films like the ones by Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet.

9. The titles at the beginning of the film explaining the "historical background" of the story are extremely vague and indeterminate: the story takes place 1,200 years ago in Kyoto, which was ravaged by civil wars, natural catastrophes, and famine.

: 15 :

An Alternative to the Classical Form: Neorealism and Modernism

If film noir can be regarded as a deviation from the classical narrative, another contemporary movement, Italian neorealism, offered other elements for a real alternative to it. Italian neorealism was a complex cultural phenomenon in postwar Italy integrating literature, journalism, and cinema. I will concentrate here only on some of its novel narrative features and its path leading to modernism.

One of neorealism's main contributions to modernism was its suppression of the hierarchy between the narrative background and the narrative foreground, which thereby loosened up the narrative structure. This was one of the basic ideas appearing at the outset of neorealism. Giuseppe De Santis claimed in 1941 that Italian cinema should follow Jean Renoir's method of providing the landscape with a dramatic function:

> Everything plays a role . . . in determining the drama of the characters: equally the figurative motifs and those invested by the interior motivations expressed by the actors. Those motivations are emotions that a human being cannot express. That is what Renoir seems to suggest to us. So it is unnecessary to resort to things that surround the human being and express these emotions through the environment.[1]

At the first glance this is only a stylistic claim for a psychologically motivated use of landscape. However, in the long run, it will have serious consequences regarding the narrative composition as well. The increased

1. Giuseppe de Santis, "Per un paesaggio italiano," *Cinema* 116 (25 April 1941), reproduced in Massimo Mida and Lorenzo Quaglietti, *Dai telefoni bianchi al neorealismo,* Biblioteca di Cultura Moderna, 839 (Milan: Laterza, 1980), 199.

importance of the narrative background results in a narrative form in which visual motives and events happening in the background are granted almost equal importance to events happening to the main heroes in the foreground. This is a narrative form in which the hero is wandering through a multitude of different spaces that expresses his existential or psychological situation. What counts here is not what is happening with the hero at those locations but what he sees or hears there. This is not purposeless wandering. The neorealist heroes always have precise goals. Wandering becomes a process where, rather than solving problems so that the hero gets closer to the final goal, the hero passively witnesses situations that amount to provoking a state of mind driving him to a decisive act.[2] Emblematic examples include films like De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* and *Umberto D.*, and Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero*, *Stromboli*, *Paisan*, and *Journey to Italy.* Like film noir, this method dismantles traditional narrative but in the opposite direction. While film noir condenses narrative effects thereby creating holes in the narrative motivation chain, neorealism "stretches" the narrative so that the difference between important and accidental events tends to vanish. This procedure has a similar effect regarding the narrative motivation chain: an essential portion of information in both is transposed onto levels that are different from the narrative one. In film noir a significant amount of meaning is conveyed by the unconscious or the mythical layer of the narrative (fatal sexual attraction, uncontrollable instincts, psychotic behavior on the one hand, myths of the femme fatale, the hard-boiled private detective, the underworld, the dark city, and the killer, on the other). In neorealism most of the meaning is conveyed by the sociocultural environment (postwar Italy, poverty, the situation of the working class, traditional ways of life).

There is another feature common to both film noir and neorealism. Both procedures question the privileged position of the main hero, but neorealism is more radical in this respect. While film noir preserves the mere persona of the active hero in control of the situation, neorealist heroes are deprived of even the appearance of control. Not only do they lose their effectiveness and control over their destiny, they also lose their image as a hero. They are typically the outcasts of society: unemployed, poor, retired, homeless children, bankrupt fishermen. Their central position in the narrative shifts significantly. Just like the film noir hero, they are no longer the driving force of their situation. Things happen to them; then don't make things happen.

2. Bazin compares this narrative technique to that of American novelists like Faulkner, Hemingway, or Dos Passos. Cf. Bazin "L'école italienne," in *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* 283.

The End of Neorealism

There are two essential traits of neorealism that make it an antecedent to rather than a part of modernism. One is its fundamental social, sometimes clearly political, commitment; modernism instead focuses on abstract, universalistic concerns. The other trait is neorealism's total lack of subjectivity and reflexivity, both of which belong to modernism's major aesthetic strategies. Hence mainstream neorealist films do not feature among the key films of the transition toward modernism. With film noir the situation is simple. With no consistent ideology, it is not a coherent movement in itself. Each film noir is to varying degrees an anomaly *within* Hollywood cinema. It is not the case with neorealism, which is a more or less consistent movement with an elaborated stylistic, narrative, and political agenda behind it. If neorealism as a movement is a significant antecedent of late modernist cinema, the key films themselves can be found *between* neorealism and modernism. These films coincided after 1948 with increased pressure on Italian politics to reduce the influence of communists. This political situation made neorealism as a leftist intellectual movement in the cinema untenable, and neorealism was left as a set of stylistic and narrative solutions without social and political orientation.

The year 1950 was an end and a beginning. It was the end of political neorealism (although De Sica's *Umberto D.* appeared only in 1952), and the beginning of a slow process where stylistic and narrative principles of neorealism were gradually emptied of their social contents to become mere surface effects ready to absorb and express different intellectual contexts other than the political. Neorealism did not disappear; it went through a substantial metamorphosis.

There were three ways of utilizing the stylistic surface of neorealism. One way was "folkloric" neorealism. Italian rural scenery and "typical" Italian popular characters, together with great stars like De Sica and Gina Lollobrigida, were extensively used in various romantic melodramas and comedies epitomized by the Luigi Comencini film *Bread, Love, and Dreams*. Here, visually almost everything remained the same as in earlier neorealism; even the social background of the people represented in the stories were similar to those depicted by neorealism—poor "people" rather than the middle-class bourgeois of the big city—but the characters' social aspect became sort of a "cultural tradition" or "couleur-locale" rather than a set of factors that have to do with political ideas or a historical situation. Another method was epitomized by the works of Fellini. He used extreme intensification of the visual surface of the representation of location and character

types. But Fellini did not make the characters' social component "more typical," he complemented it rather by an intensive psychological characterization. Michelangelo Antonioni took a third way in retooling neorealism. He too prioritized surface representation. But, unlike Fellini, he did not load the characters with psychological traits; on the contrary, he emptied out the characters even more than had neorealist auteurs.[3] Instead, Antonioni put all the focus on the visual representation of the landscape.

Modernism in *Story of a Love Affair:* Neorealism Meets Film Noir

Story of a Love Affair marked the year 1950 as a real beginning. This film contains all the important features of Antonioni's first-period modern cinema. Even if Antonioni's works were still not influential within Italian cinema for the rest of the decade, *Story of a Love Affair* was the first film to reinterpret the neorealist heritage as both a closed period of film history and at the same time an important ingredient of modern film form.

André Bazin noticed at once the special case of Antonioni at the release of the film in Paris in 1951:

> Visibly influenced by Visconti, for whom he was an assistant, but even more by Bresson's *The Ladies of Bois de Boulogne*, he shares with the latter a spirit of a certain "stylized realism." The characters incarnate certain passions and certain fates of which their physical look, their behavior, their costumes are a permanent expression.[4]

What Bazin recognized as a "stylized realism" was essentially the introduction of psychological constructions into neorealist character representation. Neorealism made extensive use of exterior signs of certain types when constructing its characters. Antonioni continued the neorealist practice of using exterior determinations in character construction, but he changed the source of the typology. First, like Fellini, he eliminated social determination

3. In one of his articles on the evolution of neorealism, Bazin distinguishes between two forms of post-neorealism, each with their own premise: "Neorealism has developed into two directions. One of them I would define as social, headed mainly by Zavattini, the other I would call moral or personal. This trend is represented obviously by Rossellini and Fellini. Between the two: psychological neorealism of Antonioni." André Bazin, *Cinema Nuovo* (March 1956). At the time Bazin was right not to consider Antonioni's use of neorealism as an independent current, given that nobody else followed in the 1950s. Retrospectively of course, we can see that, however lonely he was in the 1950s, Antonioni started one of the strongest trends of modernism, which survived even modernism in the films of Jim Jarmusch, Wim Wenders, and Béla Tarr.

4. André Bazin, *Parisien libéré*, 25 August 1951.

of the character types. But unlike Fellini, who chose his characters from a wide range of social groups, Antonioni's characters come out of a uniform social background: the urban middle class and upper middle class. He chose this social group because he wanted his characters to represent general human concerns instead of particular material problems in a given society. Second, he did not proceed into interior analysis of the characters' actions but used the locations and visual composition as a reflection of different psychological states and types. *Story of a Love Affair* is an upper-middle-class love melodrama, with no social, psychological, or biographical background motivation behind the characters' acts. Antonioni does not waste much energy to explain the couple's lethal instinct. He presents this to the viewer as a simple fact.

Bazin noticed this tendency in Antonioni's method, which unfolded fully only at the end of the decade. This method consisted in depriving his figures of particular traits and transforming them into certain types, so that their psychic determinations will be reflected by the exterior of the physical environment. Later criticism usually refers to this as the creation of the "psychological landscape." This kind of character construction is built around a specific theme right from the beginning. In fact, increasingly through the fifties and sixties, Antonioni describes only one single psychic structure: forms of moral and psychological emptiness. That is how he explains: "Contemporary reality empties the individual. Honesty and beauty tend to disappear."[5]

Antonioni's first film proves how intimately neorealism and film noir worked together long before the French new wave claimed both currents as their antecedents. Interestingly enough, film noir haunts neorealism at its beginning (Visconti, *Obsession*, 1942), and at its end, as if film noir was the gate through which filmmakers could evolve from one narrative and stylistic convention into another. Just like Visconti, who used his film noir to leave classical narrative for neorealism, by making *his* film noir Antonioni radically steps out of the neorealist universe toward modernism.

Story of a Love Affair bears all the important characteristics of a film noir: depressive, dark atmosphere; a *femme fatale* who drives the male into sin; and, above all, the male character losing control over the events happening to him. This feature of the strong male character who loses control of his fate is interestingly combined in *Story* with neorealism's passive wandering male character type. The husband is a powerful, rich, and active person who uses private detectives to control his situation by trying to unearth his wife's

5. Michelangelo Antonioni, interview in *L'Express*, 24 May 1962.

past. But in fact, this overactivity typical of film noir characters causes him to lose control of his own life, which is also typical of film noir. The lover, in turn, is a typical neorealist character: poor, unemployed, undecided. In both relationships it will be the woman who dictates. Her persona provokes the investigation, and she is the one who convinces her lover that they should kill her husband.

With regard to the dramatic structure as well, we can find a combination of film noir and neorealist characteristics. First, there is a shift in the motivation that is typical of film noir. And this shift is a very interesting one. It diverts the narrative down two separate paths. The story starts with the private investigation initiated by the husband who wishes to know more about his wife's past. He does not know what to look for, all he wants is to know more. Unwittingly, the investigation touches upon a secret in her life about the death of a girl and an aborted love affair. She meets her one-time lover again after many years because they think that the investigation is directed at their common secret about the girl's accidental death for which they feel somewhat responsible, as they could have saved her, but they chose not to. This encounter quickly reawakens their forgotten love for each other, and as their desire to be together again grows, it pushes them to plan to commit a real sin: to kill the husband, take control of his fortune, and live together. At this point the investigation comes to an end as the detective discovers and reports on the regular encounters between the wife and the man, but of course he is not aware that these encounters were provoked by the investigation itself. Here the narrative shifts topic, drops the investigation line and follows the development of its unforeseeable and incalculable psychological consequence, the murder plot. But the dimension shift in the narrative is more complicated in this film than in any other film noir. In most film noirs the mental level intervenes as a consequence of an accidental encounter with the fatal woman, while here, the encounter itself springs from the mental level of the narrative. More than that, the whole story starts and ends on that level.

The most interesting thing in *Story*'s narrative is that it starts out of "nothing at all." There is no basis for the husband's jealousy; it is a mental state without foundation: a lack of knowledge. His rational reaction to his irrational mental state, which is an unfounded suspicion, not only retroactively creates the missing foundation but also his own death: the emotional distress caused by the detective's report drives the husband into a fatal traffic accident. The murder plot cannot be accomplished because the husband dies before he could arrive at the place where Aldo waits for him with a gun. The sin is only committed mentally, not physically. The couple commits the

same moral "crime" as in the past when they were not the direct cause of the girl's death, they just wished it to happen and did not prevent it. Physical acts remain in this film on the mental level. Nothing is done, everything is imagined and wished, and imagination and wishes come to pass through accidents. Plans and wishes never result in real acts. Their desires are fulfilled each time, but the actual fulfillment is physically disconnected from their wishes.

While in film noirs where there is an investigation, the target of the investigation usually changes under the influence of the fatal woman; here the target does not change but is induced by an unfounded investigation. The usual single shift in the narrative of the film noir is replaced here by a constant oscillation between the physical and the mental levels that are both constantly present in the story: unfounded jealousy of the husband (mental state) induces the investigation (physical act), which makes the lovers meet again because of their bad consciousness (mental state and physical act), which reawakens their love for each other (mental state), they plan a murder (mental state), the detective's report causes the husband psychological distress (mental state), which causes an accident (physical act). Murder remains a mental state, and the man, disgusted by their moral guilt, leaves the woman. This solution seems to be just the opposite of most characteristic film noirs, where the solution is reached first of all on a psychological level. Here, the problem is resolved on the physical level (the detective's mission is accomplished, the couple's wish is fulfilled), but nothing is resolved on the psychological level. Their love is aborted again, which makes the narrative that started out of nothing at all end with nothing at all. There is no solution to the initial situation; the story ends basically where it began. The death of the husband does not change anything in the basic situation, and the only thing that is different at the end is that the initial psychological situation is entirely explored. It is this circular dramatic construction what Antonioni saves from neorealism. He will use this all through his modernist career.

Throughout the film Antonioni depicts deserted, empty locations, like the shore of the river where the ex-lovers first meet, the highway where they try the sports car, or the bridge over the freeway in construction where they visit the planned location of the murder. Unlike in Rossellini's *Stromboli*, where there is a constant struggle between the protagonist and her environment, in *Story* emptiness of the environment is an aesthetic expression of the characters' alienation from the environment to which there is no return. Following the characters' movements in extreme long takes (up to four minutes) is a means of isolating them from their environment where they can find no consolation. They are not suffering from *where* they are, they

are suffering from *what* they are, wherever they are. In this he can be clearly opposed to Rossellini, whose films in the same period have a style similar to Antonioni's films and are considered by many as the most important precursors of modern cinema.

Rossellini: The "Neorealist Miracle"

If we ask which neorealist directors were most specifically acknowledged at the time as the most important figures in preparation of modern cinema one name emerges as an eminent point of reference throughout the 1950s and 1960s: Roberto Rossellini. He was the uncontested hero, even the materialization of the essence of neorealism's progressive spirit especially in the eyes of French critics and filmmakers.

Rossellini was distinguished first within the neorealist movement by Bazin, and the French new wave canon celebrated Rossellini as their most important precursor. *Cahiers du cinéma* conducted half a dozen interviews with Rossellini, and film critics in the late 1950s and early 1960s constantly referred to him as the touchstone of cinematic quality. Jacques Rivette wrote: "On one side there is Italian cinema, on the other, Rossellini."[6] Probably nothing exemplifies better the Rossellini cult in the 1960s than a sentence from Bertolucci's *Before the Revolution* (1964) in which a character, slightly parodying the general opinion of a contemporary film buff, tells the main hero: "And don't forget, you can't live without Hitchcock and Rossellini!"

Of all Rossellini's films, *Journey to Italy* garnered particular attention. Rossellini himself considered this film as "very important" to his work.[7] Patrice Hovald considered *Voyage* the first film in film history that cannot be compared to anything else before it, a film that does not exist in relation to other films.[8] According to Godard, *Voyage* is one of the three films that one can see over and over again and keep discovering new things in it. Eric Rohmer simply compared it to the works of Bach.[9]

Rossellini's case is interesting indeed. To name Rossellini among the precursors of modern cinema has become a film historical must since the early 1960s. Once the French new wave had crowned him, his position became

6. Jacques Rivette, quoted in Maurice Scherer [Eric Rohmer] and François Truffaut, "Entretien avec Roberto Rossellini," *Cahiers du cinéma* 37 (July 1954): 1.

7. Roberto Rossellini, interview with Jean Duchet, *Arts* 739 (September 9, 1959): 6.

8. Patrice Hovald, *Le néo-réalisme italien et ses créateurs* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1959), 121.

9. Maurice Scherer [Eric Rohmer], "La terre du miracle," *Cahiers du cinéma* 47 (1955): 41.

unquestionable. To demonstrate how his influence in fact survived in modern cinema, how Rossellini is to be distinguished within the general truism that "neorealism was one of the sources of modern cinema," is however hard to see, however. For Rossellini became an example for many modern directors without ever becoming a modernist filmmaker himself. In this respect his role is comparable to the role of Hitchcock in the formation of modern cinema. This comparison can even be extended. The two masters shared the position in modern cinema's development of being continuously cited but never followed. The influence of Eisenstein, Vertov, expressionism, film noir, Dreyer, and the surrealists are clearly detectable in stylistic terms in modern cinema. But if we ask about Rossellini in modern cinema, all we find is a general neorealist impact in one of modernism's trends, in which Rossellini's influence specifically is indistinguishable.

Rossellini was undoubtedly a key figure of neorealism. Not only because he set the tone of the movement with his *Rome Open City* in 1945, and not at all because he represented best something like the "genuine" neorealist style, but most importantly because with some of his films made in the early 1950s—*Stromboli* (1949), *The Flowers of St. Francis* (1950), *Europa '51* (1952), and *Voyage to Italy* (1953)—he created a form that showed a certain way of transcending neorealism. Yet he never made this step.

The reason for this ambiguity resides in Rossellini's relationship to neorealism and his fervent rejection of modernism. Interestingly enough, the two had the same root: his essentially moralistic, even religious, approach to art. In one of his interviews given in 1965 he condemns contemporary cinema in the context of the then hundred-year-old modernist movement. Rossellini contends that

> in the past hundred years art has been reduced to complaints. An artist is lesser or greater depending on how much he complains. . . . Complaint, as a rather irrational attitude, doesn't seem to me to get you anywhere, when you have extremely concrete things to struggle for. The concrete things in life are pushed aside at every point. We know nothing of them because we don't get down to examining these problems.

Rossellini finds modern art superficial, unjust, and inconsequential in that it generalizes a negative attitude vis-à-vis the world, while life, he says, is much more diverse than this attitude suggests: "Anyway it's not true that everything is wrong, some things are and some things aren't." If modern artists find the world so unbearable, why don't they go out and do something to change it? He can accept the revolutionary attitude; what he rejects is modernism's escapist intellectual "moaning." In Rossellini's opinion art has

the function to "act as a guide to point the way." If an artist is unable to work that way "then the function of the artist disappears." On these premises, he even condemned retrospectively the very films that made him such an important figure in the advent of modern cinema. When asked about *Voyage*, he responded: "Yes, it was about alienation. But that's why I say that I don't even like my own films, because when I began to make those kinds of films it was of course in a search for an orientation, but when you realize that everyone has the same orientation, or is engaged in the same search, it becomes an attitude, an attitude of complaint."[10]

Rossellini was first of all concerned about the morality of art rather than style or narration. However, when at the beginning of the 1950s he started to make films focusing on personal relationships or on moral questions separated from history and society, his neorealist form became quite ambiguous. What Rossellini did to neorealism already in *Germany, Year Zero* (1948) was a kind of dismantling of it as a coherent paradigm working within sociopolitical terms. Peter Brunette is quite right to see a destructive impact in Rossellini's tendency to "moralize" neorealism. I also agree with him regarding his emphasis on Rossellini's effort to introduce expressionistic effects into neorealism, which are in principle contradictory.[11] But that is exactly what happens in *Germany, Year Zero*. Ruins of Berlin act as an abstract psychological expression of the hero's state of mind. And that is what happens in *Stromboli* as well as in *Voyage to Italy* in the penultimate scene when Katherine and Alexander walk back to their car agreeing to a divorce in the midst of the ancient ruins.

Rossellini wanted to transcend neorealism as a political project and arrive at something like "spiritual neorealism." The only problem was that contemporary life did not provide him with enough positive spiritual experience. On the contrary, he admitted that the general life experience he had before him was disorientation, alienation, and anxiety. If he wanted to remain faithful to his realist consciousness, he had to depict alienation and anxiety, in other words, join the "complaining" camp. But that meant quitting neorealism for the sake of an "unjust" general negativism. He desperately tried then to balance between the "negative" and "positive" sides, but he also admitted that in order to see the "positive side" of technological civilization one had to go back all the way to Jules Verne. It was his conviction that the source of modern art's "moaning and protests" was a fundamental

10. Roberto Rossellini, *My Method* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1992), quotations on 156, 157.

11. See Peter Brunette, *Cinema Journal* 25, no. 1 (Fall 1985): 34.

lack of knowledge about the world: "The truth is that we protest because we are confronted with a world whose structure we haven't grasped, and that seems to me the basic problem." Gaining possession of this knowledge was a central problem for Rossellini, but the realist style he adopted proved to be insufficient. Rossellini realized that the logical conclusion to the phenomenological approach of neorealism led toward some kind of modernist vision, where even morality becomes a subject of what Antonioni called the "phenomenological truth," which apparently seemed to him an immoral solution. To avoid this he recurred to another solution, inventing what I would call the "neorealist miracle."[12]

In fact, Rossellini was not the only one who thought that a "miracle" could save neorealism. De Sica and Zavattini, in their *Miracle in Milan* (1951) but also in *Umberto D.* (1952), came to this conclusion and made the totally desperate situation of their stories conclude with a happy ending by way of a miracle. This seemed to be one logical solution to avoid the general pessimism of neorealism that was then condemned and at the same time preserve social and moral engagement. A little later, Fellini still used this solution in *La strada* (1954), and in a much attenuated manner, in a form of consolation in *Nights of Cabiria* (1957). But Rossellini's "miracle" was more serious and more rooted in neorealist philosophy than De Sica's fairy tale-like or Fellini's melodramatic versions. He wanted to unfold the miracle from what he thought to be the real essence of neorealism: the close interaction between the environment and the human psyche. He sincerely believed that this interaction could lead in a way to the disappearance of alienation and anxiety. This organic approach lay also in the heart of his cinematic style. That is how he defines his films' difference from the classical style:

> Usually, in traditional cinema they cut a single scene in the following manner: an establishing shot to define the environment, we discover an individual in that environment, we get closer to him; medium shot, plan americain, close up, and we start telling his story. My method is the complete opposite of this: a character is located somewhere, and thanks to his location, we discover the environment in which he is placed. I always start with a close-up, then the movement of the camera that follows the character explores the environment.[13]

The environment does not exist outside of the character, and vice versa, the character is always depicted in relation to his environment. While the environment was defined historically, like in his first three neorealist films (*Rome, Paisan, Germany*), their being the source of morality was

12. Rossellini, *My Method*, quotations on 159, 165.

13. Roberto Rossellini, "Il mio dopoguerra," *Cinema Nuovo* 70 (10 November 1955): 346.

fairly unproblematic. The war as an environment provided a stable moral standpoint. Morality, so to speak, was encoded in the environment. So the phenomenological approach of neorealism involved automatically a moral engagement. Stepping outside of the realm of the war, the embedding of the character into the environment did not evoke unequivocal associations anymore. It had to be argued in social or some other terms. It became necessary to show what kind of environment was capable of inciting positive moral reactions. To do that Rossellini had to develop a certain psychological characterization of the landscape, which in some cases emphasized even more his expressionistic inclinations. As Gian Piero Brunetta remarks, in the Rossellini films of the early fifties, "the neorealist landscape became withdrawn into the background, or it became a projection or metaphor of the personal situation of the characters."[14] Either way, the characters became in a way alienated from their everyday environment, so in order to reestablish an organic relationship with it Rossellini had to show how the environment could become the source of morality. His films of this period exemplified this process. To quote Brunetta again:

> In the three films one can again speak of a searching, and of individual itineraries, where the representation of the totality of the gestures and behaviors demonstrates the loss of contact with the environment, the estrangement from the things, from the persons, and from the self. The characters' way leads toward a recuperation of this contact, toward a recognition of a certain sense in the things in which traces and symptoms are brought together without being able to unite them in a common frame.[15]

Rossellini skirted around the conclusion of the lack of moral contact between the environment and the characters that would have followed from a consistent phenomenological approach, and which was Antonioni's starting point right from the beginning. But Rossellini's essentialist and moralist approach did not let him make this step, so in his "trilogy of loneliness"[16] the stories depicted the lonely individual's consolation and reintegration into her environment.

It was in *Voyage* that apparently he went the farthest into the phenomenological description of estrangement, so the last-minute step back from the brink was quite shocking. This film provoked argument and embarrassment with its "miracle" ending. In this film an upper-middle-class English

14. Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano dal 1945 agli ottanta*, 380.
15. Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano dal 1945 agli ottanta*, 381.
16. Gianni Rondolino, *Roberto Rossellini* (Florence: La nuova italia, 1974), 80.

Figs. 47–48. The miracle: *Journey to Italy* (Roberto Rossellini, 1953).

couple arrives in Naples to settle some family affairs. Their relationship is clearly in a dead end, which can be seen right at the beginning of the story. While traveling around, visiting the ancestral home and other places, their marital crisis comes to a head and they decide to divorce. In the last scene, they find themselves in the middle of a religious procession, and the woman gets swept away by the crowd. Her husband runs after her trying to grab her, and that is where the "miracle" occurs: they suddenly reconcile in a great emotional outburst. When they hug each other the camera turns away from them and stops on the face of a man in uniform in the crowd.

There is a harsh contrast between the couple's depressed and estranged state of mind and the way Rossellini depicts the environment. He fills up the Italian landscape, city scenes, and rural settings with all the emotions tenderness, friendliness, and familiarity that is missing from the protagonists, whose relationship looks all the more hopeless. However, Rossellini does not allow the depressed atmosphere to prevail in the film. He continuously manifests his moral judgment over his heroes, and even when the atmosphere of warmth disappears for a moment from the environment—when

at the end they walk back to their car among the ruins—he makes a counterpoint with the help of an emotional and dramatic musical accompaniment thus preparing the miraculous turn. Nondiegetic music is always an auteurial commentary helping the viewer to make sense of the emotional content of the dramatic action. This case is not an exception. Rossellini went as far as he could in visual representation of hopeless and empty human relationships. On the soundtrack however, he wanted to give voice to his moral point of view and assure the viewer that this human condition is not final, even this situation can finish with a happy ending with the help of a spiritual miracle.

But even this "miracle" raises some questions. Eric Rohmer still felt that the miracle was a logical outcome of Rossellini's method of representing the world: "And if the film ends, I should say logically, by a miracle, it is because miracle resided in the order of the things, and this order revealed a miracle."[17] Other critics felt some kind of ambiguity in the fact that after the couple reconciles and they embrace, the camera turns away to focus on an indifferent face. When asked about this ending, Rossellini explained it by comparing this solution to naked people's spontaneous gesture to grab a towel, "drawing closer to the person with them, and covering themselves any old thing. This is the meaning the finale was meant to have."[18] He does not concede the critics' suggestion that this would be "a false happy ending."[19] He calls this film a bitter one, but one that shows that the environment can affect human relationships positively: "It was a film that rested on something very subtle, the variations in a couple's relationship under the influence of a third person: the exterior world surrounding them."[20] From this the final camera movement panning away from the embracing

17. Rohmer, review of *Voyage to Italy*, *Cahiers du cinéma* 47 (1955): 40.

18. Rossellini, *My Method*, 154.

19. Peter Bondanella contests this interpretation on the premises that Rossellini responds to the question whether it is false happy ending with the word "certo" first, which is missing from the English translation of the interview in question. In the original translation Rossellini's response is, "It is a very bitter film basically." In Bondanella's translation Rossellini's response would be, "Of course, it's a very bitter film, isn't it, after all?" Peter Bondanella, *The Films of Roberto Rossellini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 111. However, even in this translation the sentence cannot be interpreted as an unequivocal "yes." If Rossellini's "certo" had meant that, the original Italian transcript would have stressed this by separating it from the rest of the sentence by a period. This way, however, "certo" rather stands for something like "Well, it is true that this is a bitter film, but . . ." Just the way Peter Brunette interprets Rossellini's answer, and the rest of the interview confirms Brunette's interpretation.

20. Rossellini, interview with Jean Duchet.

couple logically follows: if it was the exterior world that led them back to each other, this "third person" had to have the final say. The viewers had to be reminded once more of what the cause of the "miraculous" reconciliation was, which in the light of this relation, we can agree with Rohmer, appears not that miraculous. The "miracle" arises not from *what* they are but from *where* they are, therefore it is important to show the environment again as a resource of human warmth.

Here again, all the difference is made by the soundtrack. If no cheerful and glorious music accompanied the camera's turning away from the protagonists, and ending on the face of a complete stranger, the scene would be really embarrassing, and it would emphasize the atmosphere of estrangement. (Anyone can try this effect by turning off the volume.) With the actual musical accompaniment, the face of the "unknown Italian" becomes the metaphor for everything surrounding and inspiring the cold English couple to revitalize their love. The happy ending means not that their relationship is resolved miraculously once and for all. It means that there exists a world that is a resource for anybody, even the most depressed and emotionally burned-out persons, inspiring them to try to help their emotional crisis. Rossellini was not interested in depicting human alienation. He was interested in finding a way to demonstrate how to fight it. This way was for him the representation of the organic relation between environment and the characters: the "neorealist miracle."

The most important difference between Antonioni and Rossellini resides not in their respective representation of the landscape but in the way the characters relate to the landscape, and the way the environment acts on the characters. Antonioni himself gives us the key to the comparison:

> The neorealism of the postwar period, when reality itself was so searing and immediate, attracted attention to the relationship existing between the character and the surrounding reality. It was precisely this relationship that was important and that created an appropriate cinema. Now, however, when for better or for worse reality has been normalized once again, it seems to me more interesting to examine what remains in the characters from their past experiences. This is why it no longer seems to me important to make a film about a man who has had his bicycle stolen. That is to say, about a man whose importance resides (primarily and exclusively) in the fact that he has his bicycle stolen. . . . Now that we have eliminated the problem of the bicycle (I am speaking metaphorically), it is important to see what there is in the mind and in the heart of this man who has had his bicycle stolen, how he has adapted himself, what remains in him of his past experiences, of the war, of the period after the war, of everything that has happened to him in our coun-

try—a country that, like so many others, has emerged from an important and grave adventure.[21]

Antonioni's focus on the character's mind or psyche was conceived separate from its relationship to the environment. The "inspiring" or spiritualized environment disappears in modernism. It is not the environment that changes. The landscape is not all that different in Antonioni's film from that of Rossellini's films, at least until *La notte*. It is the characters who do not find their ways back to their world nor to each other. And that difference is already palpable right in Antonioni's first film, *Story of a Love Affair*.

This can be illustrated by comparing two very similar scenes from *Voyage* and *La notte*. Antonioni ended his film quite the same way as Rossellini. Both films treat the marital crisis of a middle-aged couple. Both narratives are based on basically aimless wandering. In both films the environment plays an important role in helping them to articulate their emotional crisis. Both films end with a scene in which the husband and wife clarify their situation, one of them provokes reconciliation, and they end up in each other's arms. And both films conclude with the camera turning away from the embracing couple. The difference is that while in *Voyage* the realization and articulation of the crisis occurs in middle of the film and the last scene is the reconciliation, in *La notte* the realization and articulation of the crisis is left to this final scene, where Lidia is able for the first time to tell Giovanni, "I don't love you anymore." And as the film ends at that point, reconciliation is no longer possible in the film. This scene features crisis rather than reconciliation. This is of course very different from Rossellini's ending, where the last sentence is, "All right, I love you," and where the couple's embrace signals the end of the crisis. In *La notte*, on the contrary, physical contact is the beginning of the struggle. In fact they do not embrace; Giovanni drags Lidia down to the ground and lies upon her trying to calm her down and make her stop repeating that she doesn't love him. When the camera turns away from Alex and Katherine in *Voyage*, it is to emphasize the role of the human environment in their reconciliation. When Antonioni turns his camera away, it is to show the indifference of the environment and to maintain the atmosphere of isolation or alienation. We see a beautiful landscape with no human beings in it, and we leave the agonizing couple with their problem that nobody and nothing can resolve. Rossellini reintegrates his couple into the crowd. He brings them back among people from the abandoned ruins, and when he leaves them alone, we do not have the feeling that they are lonely any

21. Cited in Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema from Neorealism to the Present* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 108.

longer. By leaving his couple alone, Antonioni stresses the continued isolation within an indifferent environment. Even if they remain strangers in the crowd, this crowd of people around Alex and Katherine literally pushed them to reunite, but there is nobody around Lidia and Giovanni, there is nothing and nobody outside to keep them together. The only person who was important for both of them, their friend, disappeared. This atmosphere of abandonment is emphasized by the smooth melancholic jazz tunes that come back at that point, when the camera turns away, while Rossellini is celebrating the reconciliation by loud and cheerful popular music.

One of the main goals of the emerging modernist cinema in the late 1950s and early 1960s was precisely transcending the organic approach of neorealism in various ways. Rossellini became the most spiritualist within neorealism, but just because he remained within the paradigm, his steps in this direction seemed insufficient and ambiguous in relation to the modern form as soon as more radical solutions appeared. Spiritualism appeared in much more radical forms, for example, in Bergman's films; realism appeared much more radically in cinéma vérité; and the essay form together with expressionism appeared radically in Godard's films. Impassive and distanced psychological representation of landscape was more characteristic in the films of Antonioni even before *L'avventura.* Most of what Rossellini achieved in the early 1950s was not radical and characteristic enough to serve as a stylistic model for modern cinema.

Nevertheless, if there is anything that can be pointed out as Rossellini's legacy to modernism, we can find it in a certain relaxed, almost careless, experimenting attitude that was illuminating for a certain kind of modern cinema, that of the Godardian French new wave and its followers. According to Godard, Rossellini showed that one should not be afraid of making films "only for a few people."[22] Rossellini himself defines his own role in the formation of modern cinema according to that attitude:

> Basically, if I did make any contribution to what they [the French new wave] have done it was through stressing again and again that above all they should not regard the cinema as something mystical. . . . The absolute freedom these people have with the camera arises from this demystifying of the process of making films.[23]

22. Godard, *Introduction a une véritable histoire du cinéma.*

23. Rossellini, *My Method*, 163. Gianni Rondolino put this attitude into stylistic terms: "The mixture of genres, or the coexistence in a single work of narrative, dramatic, lyric, documentary, and essayistic elements, involves a kind of aesthetic 'disharmony' . . . which opens the work beyond a more or less rigid structure. Then, this very placement of narra-

Rossellini's films appealed in fact to young French critics of the *Cahiers* for their quality of improvisation and the fact that Rossellini does not work from a well-written script, for their "impassive" tone refraining from "cinematic effects," and for their highly emotional character. In spite of their classical style, Rossellini's films were the first examples of how emotional identification can be created by not using conventional dramatic effects, by remaining close to a natural, everyday perception of the environment, and using the camera as a tool for immediate personal expression.

However, as far as impassive description of the character-environment relationship was concerned, Antonioni's early films were much more radical in leaving behind the neorealist paradigm. Already in *Story of a Love Affair,* Antonioni showed how estrangement could be represented in a consistent way by investing the landscape with psychological expressiveness. Again, the difference was not that the landscape in Antonioni's films were more expressive than in Rossellini's films, but that expressive landscape in the Antonioni films was a purely aesthetic quality, indifferent regarding characters' acts, and isolated from them.

We followed the reappearance and propagation of modernist principles in European cinema in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Even though this survey could not be comprehensive, I have tried to point out the first and most significant cases in which the emergence of modern forms is sensible with some clarity. To a great extent these films determined also the way modernism in the 1960s developed. And even though clear historical connections cannot be traced in each case, it is quite obvious that these films became the models for modern filmmaking over the following twenty-five years. At the stylistic roots of modern cinema we find neorealism and film noir, which directly or indirectly influenced all trends in modern cinema. Critical auteurial reflexivity became one of the principle models of a certain trend of modern cinema as first realized by Bergman in *Prison*. Theatrical abstraction of the few-character closed-situation drama was another fundamental form, appearing in Melville's *Le silence de la mer,* or even in some early Berg-

---

tive and dramatic elements in the finished structure of the film, with its frequent stylistic jumps, its unusual alterations, its formal carelessness, demands a lack of cohesion among its parts which favor the freedom of observation and the personal choice of the spectator. Finally and above all, the images and the dialogue are offered as 'proposals' and not as 'solutions.'" Cited by Peter Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini* (Berkeley Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 170–171. In my opinion this cannot be interpreted as a description of Rossellini's style, rather as different perspectives that could be developed from Rossellini's attitude.

man films like *Secrets of Women*. Another main trend was informed by the problem of narrative ambiguity appearing for the first time in Kurosawa's *Rashomon*. The vast trend of constructing abstract forms on cultural myths and rites was undoubtedly initiated by Fellini in *The White Sheik* (1952) or at the latest in *I vitelloni* (1953), although real modern theatrical and ornamental styles of the second period of modernism had no antecedents in the 1950s. Two version of minimalist abstraction became apparent in the 1950s. One of these is associated with Robert Bresson, and which in many ways stylistically prepared the ground for the French new wave. The other version of minimalist abstraction, probably the most influential and the most lasting trend of modernism, was Antonioni's alienated minimalism, which fertilized European art cinema the longest.

PART FOUR

Fig. 49. Jean Seberg in *Breathless* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960).

The Short Story of Modern Cinema (1959–1975)

:16:
The Romantic Period, 1959–1961

In the three chapters that follow I will give an outline of modernist art cinema's development between 1959 and around 1975 in Europe. I will concentrate on the aesthetic history of the modern forms, their development, and their mutual influences. I divide this history into three periods. The first one, which I name "the romantic period," is the shortest, covering the years 1958 until around 1961. This is the era of the appearance of the first essential modernist films that started the main trends. This was also the period of modernism's disputing its relationship with the classical forms. The second period, covering the years 1962 through 1966, will be termed "established modernism." This is when modernism turns into a vast international movement and becomes a kind of norm in European art cinema. This is also the period when modern art cinema becomes highly self-reflective. The third period starting in 1967, the longest, is "political modernism." This last period could be divided into two periods: the first, preparing and bearing the influence of the political countercinema movement (1967–1970), and the second, which can be regarded as the period of dissolution of modernism and the transition into postmodern (1971–ca. 1978). These two subperiods are both characterized by modern cinema's search for new inspiration, particularly in social and historical reality, and in different cultural mythologies.

The general view of film historiography about this period is that starting from the late 1950s the phenomenon known as "modern film," "the new cinema," or "the new waves," gradually conquered every important filmmaking country in Europe. A new generation of filmmakers created the "new cinemas"; in other words, they brought a new approach to filmmaking into the art cinema of each of these countries.

The facts of the history and evolution of modern cinema in this period, the breakthrough of the French new wave, the modernist turn of some of the already established masters such as Bresson, Antonioni, Fellini, or Bergman a little bit later, the arrival of the "new wave" generation in countries like Italy, Poland, the Soviet Union, England, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, have been documented and commented upon more widely than in any period before it in the history of cinema. Here I want to show first that the innovative narrative and stylistic solutions appearing in the national cinemas in this period did not yield to modernism in each and every case. The categories of "new cinema" and "modernism" were not always overlapping. I will also argue that European modernism started with a few individual, fairly dissimilar, films made between 1958 and 1961 in Italy and France, which became the basic models for other modernist filmmakers. That is to say that modern cinema was not a homogeneous movement already at its beginning; it was rather a set of different modernist trends relying on various cinematic and extracinematic traditions, and accompanied by the continuation of classical art-filmmaking.

Neorealism: The Reference

When Fellini visited the Centro Sperimentale in Rome in 1958, he was asked by the students whether or not he considered himself a neorealist director. This was his answer: "In sum, if we mean by 'neorealism' a sincerity regarding the themes or the characters about whom we want to tell a story, I think, I am a neorealist director."[1] Neorealism was a general catchword at the time for a free-spirited, lively, socially and morally engaged, intellectual attitude that still could be endorsed, even when its stylistic surface, its dramatic conception were already considered outdated. It is clear that for Fellini neorealism meant no longer a style, rather an emblem of a general moral approach. Apparently, it was important to him to make a distinction between the stylistic and the "moral" meanings of neorealism, rejecting the former and accepting the latter as he had earlier in the fifties. This attitude can be characterized as a serious approach to what could be considered "reality," and that attitude kept neorealism alive as a tradition and as a stylistic background into the early 1960s. But Fellini, as a modernist filmmaker already, meant something totally different by the notion of "reality." "Reality" for him was not rooted in social or political "objectivity" but rather in the authenticity of a personal vision. "Humility towards life" claimed by Rossellini did not mean for him

1. Federico Fellini, "Mon métier," *Cahiers du cinéma* 84 (June 1958): 16.

"humility towards the camera." "[O]nce you're in front of the camera, you ought to abandon this humility completely; on the contrary, you ought to be arrogant, tyrannical, you ought to become a sort of god, in total command not only of the actors, but also of the objects and the lights."[2]

Fellini's answer illustrates a general attitude current in the late 1950s when art cinema started to take new shapes. The earliest and most important change in European art cinema of the 1950s was the decline of neorealism in Italy. After 1956 in very different ways, filmmaking style started to change in other countries, too, especially in the Soviet Union, Poland, England, and France. If one looks closer into these changes, one can see a diversity that makes the new cinematic movements of these countries very different in their perspectives; in some cases they even took opposing directions. Still, the most widespread tendency of the second half of the 1950s in European art cinema was a turn away from artificial-looking indoor studio style toward some kind of natural-looking, less dramatic, free-style form. This however was not what modernization of the film form was all about; this could be best seen as the most general common background of this modernization. Italian neorealism was the most obvious model for this kind of "free realism," which is why neorealism became the most widespread immediate reference for modern cinema relative to which most filmmakers defined themselves, taking positions at various distances from it at the beginning of the 1960s.

As a general rule we can assert that the deeper a film was influenced by modernism, even in the realist trend, the farther it strayed not only from classical style but from neorealism also. However, that does not mean that all the new filmmakers of the modernist mainstream were necessarily close to neorealism, and vice versa, that a kind of neorealist revival occurred in national cinemas where modernism appeared most forcefully. "New cinemas" were a diverse phenomena even on a national level. In Italy, modernism broke through with Antonioni followed later by Fellini, but Italian "new cinema" was equally characterized by a strong neorealist revival by Visconti, Pasolini, Bertolucci, Rosi, and Olmi. In France, modernism appeared in very different forms by Godard and Resnais, but there too, a weak neorealist influence found its way in Jacques Rozier's *Adieu Philippine* (1961), or even in Agnès Varda's *La pointe-courte*, which at the same time were not the only nor the most important representatives of realism in new French cinema.

Social realism did not mean stylistic neorealism in each case, either. In England, the "free cinema" movement adopted topics of social concern in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These subjects were accompanied by some

2. Cited in Suzanne Budgen, *Fellini* (London: British Film Institute, 1966), 92.

Fig. 50. French neorealism: *La pointe courte* (Agnès Varda, 1957).

outdoor takes of everyday life, but "free cinema" used the same classical dramatic storytelling and the same classical dramatic deep-focus theatrical, clair-obscur style that dominated filmmaking in the 1940s and early

1950s especially in America, England, but also the Soviet Union. This adherence to the classical expressive dramatic style was obviously due to the theatrical sources of cinematic renewal in England, as it was the case also in Poland with Andrzej Wajda, and in Sweden with Ingmar Bergman, who in fact never abandoned dramatic visual expressionism in his style. Neorealism reached British cinema much later, in the mid-1960s with the films of Ken Loach starting with *Poor Cow* (1967). The "new English cinema" was in fact "new" and "realist" because of its new approach to social issues, but it was not *neorealist*, even less modernist, because of its highly classical visual and narrative conception that did not question the classical norm even as much as Italian neorealism did.

It was in Italy where neorealism was the strongest as modern cinema's background. The young filmmakers of the generation debuting in the early 1960s, each in their own way, took neorealism as the point of departure, as one can see in Olmi's *The Job*, Pasolini's first film (*L'Accattone!*) and Bertolucci's first film (*The Grim Reaper*). Even Visconti returned to realism in *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960).

In France, as much as neorealism was welcomed by critics in the late 1940s and early 1950s (we can even say that to a great extent neorealism owed its position to André Bazin and his fellow French critics), when it came to filmmaking, young filmmakers related to neorealism only in an extremely ambiguous way. They talked about neorealism a lot in their writings and conversations, they even compared their own films especially to Rossellini, but the way they utilized the elements of their realist style only vaguely suggested neorealism, or even could be seen as a parody of it. Neorealism interested them as moviegoers rather then as filmmakers.

The only film of the French new wave that to some extent could be related to neorealism was Jacques Rozier's *Adieu Philippine* (1961). The only antecedent of this film was Varda's *La pointe-courte* from 1957, a strange love melodrama set in the middle of a neorealist style representation of a fishing village. Even this neorealist style was mixed from time to time with artistically composed photography-style cinematography. Nevertheless, Rozier's film was later understood as the only example of the neorealist influence in French cinema. As the magazine *Arts* put it: "This is the first neorealist film French cinema offered."[3] Godard, who helped Rozier in finding a producer and always defended the film, mentioned precisely that aspect of this film that related it to neorealism, but, from another point of view, distinguished it from the essence of modernism: "What Antonioni was looking for and hasn't found in *L'avventura* . . . Rozier has found in *Adieu Philippine* without even looking for it. It may sound pretentious to say, but Rozier has found the *relation between people and things*."[4] This "relation between people and things" is what distinguishes Antonioni's modernism from Rossellini's postneorealism. The constant referencing of neorealism among French new wave directors was a longing for the organic vision of neorealism and was part of a nostalgia for classicism (which is why they distinguished Rossellini's moralism from De Sica's social engagement). Rossellini's organic approach, however, did not become a model for them to follow, and when someone indeed followed that organic approach they did not miss the opportunity to compare it unfavorably to the modernism of Antonioni.

Thus the French new wave left itself open to Italian critics' observations that it abused rather than really followed neorealism.[5] Probably the most conspicuous example of this "misuse" can be found in Eric Rohmer's first film, *The Sign of Leo* (1959). Rohmer's film is almost a caricature of *The Bicycle Thief*. Rohmer uses the visual style and narrative patterns of De Sica's emblematic neorealist film to tell a story about a young American playboy in Paris who runs out of money, tries in vain to borrow some from friends, and roams the streets of Paris with nowhere to go or sleep until even his shoes and his clothes become ragged. We follow his aimless wandering around Paris, we see his increasing suffering from tiredness and hunger, we see him being humiliated when he attempts to pick some food here and there on the street, we see other happy people around him making his situation feel even more hopeless very much in the way De Sica used this tool. And suddenly,

3. In *Arts* 5 (1962): 5–29.

4. In *Lettres français* (24 May 1962): 24, emphasis added.

5. Luchino Visconti, *Approccio al realismo* (Rome: Mondo Nuovo, 1960).

when everything seems hopeless, a scene begins that, at first sight, seems totally displaced: a person driving a big American car on a provincial highway suffers a deadly accident. We learn that this was the hero's uncle from whom he inherited a fortune. And the film ends with an almost surrealistic happy ending where the viewer forgets about all the social and existential concerns brought up while watching the main character's desperate situation. Realist style and representation of social reality is radically distinct in Rohmer's film, as if this film's aim was to ridicule the viewer's reflexes and sensitivity regarding social concerns while watching a "realist-style" film. If *The Sign of Leo* is reminiscent of neorealism it is only in its most superficial stylistic elements of representing everyday banality. The plot element introduced by neorealism, extensive aimless wandering, is applied here not to explore a social environment but to build up the atmosphere of the absurdity of bad luck or simply the atmosphere of senselessness. If neorealism could still be interpreted in 1958 by Fellini as a moral stance without stylistic consequences, Rohmer's film in turn is a stylistic reminiscence without neorealism's substantial moral attitude.[6]

Social realism, however, was not missing from French cinema of the late 1950s. But its presence was due to a genuinely French innovation, rather than to the impact of neorealism. French ethnographer Jean Rouch invented something new within the realist paradigm that established his films as the representatives of a special modernist version of cinéma vérité. His conception originated from ethnographic filmmaking, where step by step he became interested not only in the subject he wanted to document in his film but also in the interaction between the subject and the process of documentation. He realized that cinematic documentation of a different culture means recording how representatives of this culture behave in the presence of a European ethnographer with a movie camera. So, if he wants genuine representation of a cultural fact what he should do is have the natives represent themselves with the movie camera. He should use the camera as a means of self-presentation of the human subject of his studies. Let the camera be the "eye" through which cultural facts become visible. He personalized the camera and made this "camera-eye" participate directly in the particular event he wanted to document. He was right away compared

6. The critic of *Cahiers,* then headed by Rohmer himself, was very careful to point out that Rohmer's film had nothing to do with neorealism: "It is high time to place *The Sign of Leo* at its deserved height, which has nothing to do with what some people would look for in neorealism." Claude Jutra, "En courant derrière Rouch," *Cahiers du cinéma* 115 (January 1961): 26.

to Dziga Vertov, and his style was referred to as "cinéma vérité," indicating the auteur's deep engagement with reality.[7] However, this reality was not conceived of as some impersonal objective truth, but rather as a truth of those whose story the film tells. Rouch went further, and came out with his first cinéma vérité feature film in 1957, *I, a Negro*.

The novelty of cinéma vérité in the fiction film was not the direct film style, but the fact that Rouch let the characters reflect directly on their own roles, to tell their opinions about the film they were in. The cinéma vérité films told partly fictive stories, but the actors were not only given full freedom to act in the scenes according to what they felt appropriate, but also, from time to time they were given the opportunity to directly formulate their reflections on the story, a situation, or other characters. On this level cinéma vérité films were pure documentaries representing ordinary people performing in fictive situations and representing their true feelings and thoughts about the fiction they were playing. On another level they were narrative fictions, for the stories were made up by the director and characters together. For example, in *I, a Negro*, the main character pretends to be Eddie Constantine in Treichville, Ivory Coast. The film simply follows him playing this game in his town. In the final analysis, cinéma vérité was a form of documenting how fiction comes about from reality, and also how it interacts with reality. And in this respect it did not have any relationship with neorealism or with any other direct film movement before it,[8] on the contrary, it contested neorealism's unambiguous socially and morally motivated relationship to reality as well as its lack of self-consciousness.[9]

7. The term "cinéma vérité" was in fact a result of a translation error. Georges Sadoul compared Rouch's ethnographic films to Dziga Vertov's conception of self-reflexive documentary and newsreel genre, which Vertov called "Kino-Pravda," which literally means cinema-truth. However, what Vertov meant to evoke by this category was not "reality" but the Communist party's daily paper, *Pravda* (truth), as he considered his films as the filmed editions of *Pravda*. So, the correct translation would have been "filmed *Pravda*," or "*Pravda* film." However, as it is often the case, the translation error proved to be useful and productive, and thus became a term for a genre.

8. During the 1960s the category was widely used and applied to various documentary schools. For example, James Blue in his book on cinéma vérité distinguishes between two main trends, the American and the European cinéma vérité, where the passive, self-effacing attitude characterizes only the European trend epitomized by Jean Rouch. James Blue, "Thoughts on Cinéma Vérité and a Discussion with the Maysles Brothers," *Film Comment* 4 (1964).

9. This is why Rossellini became a fervent enemy of cinéma vérité, accusing it of "immorality," and admitted to have "trembled of fury" when he saw Rouch's *La punition*.

Eastern Europe: From Socialist Realism toward Neorealism

If we take into consideration that after 1956 narratives and in some cases film style also changed considerably in Eastern and Central Europe, especially in Poland and the Soviet Union, it appears as though this change was part of the same modernizing movement within French and Italian cinema. The changes that undoubtedly took place in Soviet and Polish cinema in these years were parallel phenomena to the appearance of Western modernism but were significantly different. If in the Western scene we see a move away from neorealism in order to reach a modern form, in the Soviet Union and Poland we find tendencies toward neorealism as a form of modernization. The new auteurs' main goal was to move away from the dominant ideology and the heroic style of social realism. New phenomena within Soviet and Polish cinema at this time could be seen as modernization only in the sense that it turned back to an important source of modernism, but not as modern cinema emerged in France or Italy in 1957–1959 or even as modernism was reached by later East European directors such as Tarkovsky, Polanski, and Jancsó, all of whom debuted as modern filmmakers in 1962.

The main issue filmmakers and critics discussed in the Soviet Union and Poland was whether *neorealist* style was permissible in socialist cinema. If these debates mentioned modernism at all, they meant neorealism rather than anything else. And by neorealism they meant subjects of everyday banality, nondramatic narration, the lack of positive and active heroes, and representation of "surface reality." Neorealism was debated because that was the stylistic model that new films of the period used to circumvent the official trend of "socialist realism" and its ideological and hyperdramatic heroic style still prevalent around 1956. From these debates we can see also to what extent neorealism was not only a stylistic but also a political issue. Filmmakers had to defend themselves regarding being called "neorealist," as it very easily became a label meaning "superficial representation." "Representation of exterior signs of everyday life is clearly contrary to the method of socialist realism," stated S. A. Gerasimov, a Soviet party official responsible for the film industry, in 1959.[10] For very different reasons, the neorealist label was shunned in the communist countries in the late 1950s, just as it was condemned by right-wing Italian politicians of the late 1940s and early 1950s. For the Italian right it was obviously the leftist political

---

See Fereydoun Hoveyda and Eric Rohmer, "Nouvel entretien avec Roberto Rossellini," *Cahiers du cinéma* 145 (July 1963): 5.

10. Gerasimov, "The Soviet Cinema and Contemporary Reality," *Filmkultúra* 4 (1960): 8.

content that made neorealism undesirable; in the Soviet Union and in other satellite countries it was the deheroizing "superficial" style that was unappealing to cultural bureaucrats.

In 1958 Jerzi Plazewski saw at least two followers of neorealism in Polish cinema: "When it became impossible not to see that Kawalerowicz belonged to the Polish 'Italian school,' this school still continued to exist given that [Andrzej] Munk was still around." But with *Heroism* (1958) Munk quit this school.[11] At the same time, in 1958 there was a "neorealist" turn in Soviet cinema. These new films were much criticized by Soviet critics; their makers were criticized because their films entirely lacked the heroic theme: Alexander Alov and Vladimir Naumov's *The Wind* (1958), Tengiz Abuladze's *Someone Else's Children* (1958), and Marlen Khutsiyev's *The Two Fedors* (1958). The auteurs of these films disputed their relationship to the tradition of the heroic representation. This tradition leaned on a moral ideal that they shared, but they also wanted to adjust this tradition to their own notion of heroism. And the only alternative available for them was either to use irony, like Andrzej Munk in *Heroism*, or to apply the antiheroic, undramatic, but unappreciated model of neorealism, an opposite of dramatic heroism.

Following the neorealist model meant for them also a return to a style that had been unavailable at the beginning of the 1950s because of the imposed cultural policy of "socialist realism." They turned back to where real modernization could be generated. The same process happened in Czechoslovakia only five–six years later. "Liberation" of the cinema took the path of the neorealist model first before it turned modern later. While Kawalerowicz and Polanski in Poland and Tarkovsky in the Soviet Union already introduced a modernism beyond neorealism in Eastern Europe, Passer and Chytilová started their careers by returning to a peculiar version of neorealism before experimenting with different versions of the modern form.

Hungary presents a special case. The development of modern Hungarian cinema was not preceded by a neorealist phase in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This could be explained by the fact that Hungarian cinema had a strong neorealist phase all through the 1940s in the films of István Szöts and Géza Radványi, and that therefore an embrace of the neorealist model would have been regarded more as a step backward than as real modernization of the film form. For Jancsó, the model for modernization was already Antonioni rather than Rossellini or Olmi.

11. Jerzi Plazewski, "Le jeune cinéma polonaise (II)," *Cahiers du cinéma* 82 (April 1958): 26. At this time Kawalerowicz was no longer a "Polish neorealist," but Plazewski could not know it yet, as Kawalerowicz's new film came out only in 1959.

Heroism versus Modernism

Analysis of Soviet and Polish films of the second half of the 1950s reveals an interesting ambiguity that was a result of their struggle against the heroic style. One of the most appreciated Soviet films in this period was Grigori Chukhrai's *Ballad of a Soldier* (1959). This film is a straight linear story about a soldier in the Second World War who is granted a week's leave for having single-handedly eliminated two German tanks. First we see that there the heroic act was unintentional; he was simply so scared that he didn't even look where he was shooting. The rest of the film tells of his long journey home where he has to repair the roof of his mother's house. En route he is constantly delayed by different events, in which he has to help other people, so when he finally gets home there is no time left and he must return to the front right away. The main novelty of this film is that it basically consists of several short stories loosely connected to each other, which makes an undramatic picaresque story structure. The film is set almost entirely in the everyday life of ordinary people living their lives during wartime, just like an earlier and more conventional piece, *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957) by Mikhail Kalatozov. Instead of depicting the hardships of the battle, they focus on the hardships of everyday people in everyday life in wartime.

Nonetheless, these films did not break entirely with the heroic tradition. They did not suppress emotional attachment to their heroes and they did not alienate the heroes from the viewer or make abstract "models" of them. They did not eliminate moral judgment, and they did not venture into paradoxes of moral judgments. All the films did was to emphasize the everydayness of their heroes, who at the same time remained heroes in one way or another. One can understand these films as vacillating between two forms: heroic drama and realist description of everyday banality. And their strength was precisely to introduce ambiguity into heroic drama rather than leave it behind for any kind of deheroizing modernism.

One finds the same scheme in Wajda's early films, especially his best renowned *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958). Here the ambiguity is formulated into the very plot as the hero's dilemma: Maciek has to make a choice between extraordinary heroism and normal everyday life. Either he can put an end to his hopeless war against the victorious communists and shift to a normal everyday life or he can continue the heroic effort for a lost cause. Maciek makes the choice: he will finish this last job and then quit. But this last job becomes a real last one for him: he gets killed. The hero's historical dilemma is in fact a metaphor of the most general concern of Eastern European film-

Figs. 51–52. Soviet heroism: *Ballad of a Soldier* (Grigori Chukhrai, 1959).

makers: how to leave behind the heroic paradigm of the war and Stalinism and return to normal everyday life. Wajda managed to not only put this dilemma into the plot but also make it the substance of the film's style. Wajda's film vacillates between two stylistic patterns. At certain points the style is very expressive and intense, like for example when the young couple enters the ruined church where a guard watches over the bodies of the two men killed by Maciek earlier that day. At other points the style becomes clearly undramatic, descriptive, and loose, like in the celebration scene. Just like Chukhrai, Wajda also refuses to deheroize his main character. He tries to keep a balance between everyday banality and heroic behavior. Chukhrai's soldier is an antihero in military terms but becomes a hero in very simple everyday terms: he is a very good man with a great sense of justice and full of helpfulness. Wajda's Maciek is also an antihero as he becomes ambivalent regarding his mission. But in a way he remains a hero too, but one who sacrifices his life for a just but lost cause. The ambiguity of Wajda's judgment on his main character is quite remarkable, since at that time the Polish Home

Army, which fought equally against the Soviets and the Germans, was not recognized officially as representing a just cause. Yet Wajda finds his way to express his sympathy for the tragic hero.

In sum, the neorealist influence varied by country. While British and Hungarian cinemas' socially concerned movements were not influenced by neorealism, the French new wave was slightly affected by it but mainly developed its own realist tradition. In Italy a short revival of neorealism involved mainly newcomers who consciously moved on from this tradition after 1961. For Soviet and Polish cinema of the late 1950s and for Czech cinema of the early 1960s, a return to neorealism meant the transition toward modern cinema. Consequently, at the same time when modernism broke through in Western Europe, in the Soviet Union and Poland neorealism was used to reinterpret the heroic tradition. The films made in 1958-1959 did not seek to distance their heroes and subjects from everyday banality in any abstract way, neither by idealizing them as war heroes nor by putting them into extraordinary situations, nor by making them turn away from their everyday environment by submerging into abstract mental activities. Modern film forms did not reach Soviet cinema until Tarkovsky's *Childhood of Ivan* in 1962. This film offered another twist to the heroic tradition but from an already modernist perspective introducing the mental journey form into Soviet cinema.

Jerzy Kawalerowicz: The First Modern Polish Auteur

For the most part, the works of the new generation Polish directors in 1958-1959, among them Andrzej Munk, Andrzej Wajda, Wojciech Has, and Feliks Falk, brought no modernist turn into Polish cinema. Nonetheless, Polish cinema took its part in the general European emergence of modernism in 1959 due to one director whose film, released in 1959, joined the general modernist breakthrough. It was Kawalerowicz's *The Night Train.*

This film was a spectacular break with the dilemma between romantic heroism and everyday realism that continued to dominate the wartime genre films that still encumbered Wajda at that time (e.g., *Lotna*, 1959).This might account for the bad reviews *The Night Train* received when it was released in Poland, while it was roundly praised by Western critics for its audacious modernity.[12] In fact, it is a fairly early and therefore quite original manifestation of the closed-situation genre in East European cinema, with a highly restricted narration technique and a minimalist visual style. Kawalerowicz's film tells a story about a night train journey following a mysterious, even

12. See, for example, Guido Fink's review in *Cinema Nuovo* 156 (1960).

suspicious, character who accidentally finds himself in a sleeping compartment with a woman. They have no other choice but to find a way to share the compartment. Later it turns out that the police are looking for a criminal on the train, and for a short time the film allows the viewer to suspect that the man in the compartment is the police suspect. When the real criminal is finally found and tries to escape, Kawalerowicz creates an almost surrealistic scene in which the whole train starts to chase the man through the fields. When the train finally arrives at its destination the passengers go their own ways, relations started on the train vanish at once, the woman walks away alone on the empty seashore, and the film ends showing the deserted compartments one by one, generating a feeling of disturbing emptiness.

The Night Train creates a closed experimental situation in which the characters' relationship is constructed upon their actual and immediate interactions rather than on their background. All we know about them are some details of their immediate present life, which in both cases represent a break with the past. This kind of restricted immediacy is the essence of this genre. On the one hand, Kawalerowicz manages to build up a relationship between his characters, about whom we know hardly anything, thereby maintaining a constant feeling of suspense. This feeling escalates thrilling when it turns out that the hero could be a murderer (it turns out later that he is a doctor who has lost a patient during an operation). But on the other hand, Kawalerowicz applies the Antonioni pattern of dramatic disappearance: both characters are at an empty point of their respective lives: the woman is fleeing her ex-lover (who also boards the train and tries to contact her in different ways), the man escapes the awful experience of the operation and death of his patient. They both find themselves at an empty and indeterminate spot on a train in a randomly created situation, between two specific points, both trying to leave something behind. This is a perfectly abstract situation of emptiness where new beginnings are usually possible. But conforming to the pattern of disappearance in the Antonioni films, instead of building up a new system of relationships, the story becomes emptied out entirely. Nothing is left from their encounter, no new relationship is created, and their arrival at their destination, especially for the woman, is akin to a dead end. Their goal was flight and leaving things behind, and that is just what they accomplished. They became instrumental for each other to liberate themselves from their own painful situation. The man wanted to get rid of his anguish, and in fact that is what happens. For him, as though his wishes were projected symbolically, this trip was like psychotherapy. First he is mistaken for the murderer and taken into custody, then the woman helps him by identifying the real killer. When it is said out loud that he is

not the murderer, he is symbolically absolved for the operation gone bad, and more than that, he even becomes the hero of the day. On the other hand, he also helps the woman get rid of the ex-lover from whom she is trying to escape. When the train makes a stop, and the ex-lover knocks on the window of the compartment from the outside, the man pulls the curtain aside, which is when the young man gives up his attempts and does not board the train again. The two heroes both helped each other to shed their pasts, but this did not become the basis for a new relationship.

Kawalerowicz made a second modernist masterpiece shortly after *The Night Train* in which he further developed his minimalist style. In *Joan of the Angels* (1961), Kawalerowicz's use of used empty spaces and flat and empty surfaces was unprecedented Eastern European cinema, considering that the film was basically made during 1960 and released at the Cannes Film Festival in 1961 to great acclaim. His emphatically geometrical, sometimes almost abstract, compositions were modernist stylistic achievements of the same order as those of the contemporary films of Antonioni or Bresson. In this film Kawalerowicz is a consciously modernist filmmaker.

It is remarkable that the two films have very little in common even though very little time passed between them. If *The Night Train*'s modernism can be best grasped in its dramatic construction, the modernism in *Joan of the Angels* extends also to its visual style. This film was an unequivocal attempt to reach an abstract spiritual style through minimalist visual abstraction similar to the later realization by Tarkovsky in his *Andrei Rublev* (1966). Because of its topic, *Joan of the Angels* was already praised not only on the international but also on the national scene. The story is about a priest who arrives at a convent to exorcise the nuns' community, which is haunted by the Devil. Exorcism fails, and the priest finally falls in love with the chief nun. According to Kawalerowicz, his intention with this film was to make a story about love that breaks through established order.[13] But the film could also be interpreted as a protest against political and ideological dogmatism. Interestingly enough the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy in Poland rather than the Communist Party condemned this film for its subject matter.

Both films were important contributions to the start of late modern cinema in Eastern Europe, but the bigger success of his second film illustrates

13. "I wanted the film to be about the nature of man, the nature that resists imposed restrictions and dogmas. The most important thing is the feeling we call love. *Joan of the Angels* is, after all, a story of love between a priest and a nun." Cited in Bołesław Michalek and Frank Turaj, *The Modern Cinema of Poland* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 104.

the most important thematic difference between modern cinemas in Eastern and Western Europe. One of the most important distinguishing factors of Eastern European modernism is its commitment to problems of national history, which in a particular film's evaluation occasionally eclipsed its formal modernism. This is also the reason why this period of Polish cinema is more amply represented in film history books by the early films of Wajda (*Ashes and Diamonds*, *The Canal*, *Lotna*) or Munk (*Heroism*), which were all made in a classical heroic style. Kawalerowicz was seen by Polish critics rather as an uncertain experimental director because he seemed not to have a strong commitment to the national theme.[14] By contrast, Wajda's and Munk's films contributed to and informed to a large degree the social debate over Polish national history and historical consciousness. They were in a certain way a reevaluation of Poland's role in the war, for example, in the way they treated the Polish Home Army in *Ashes and Diamonds* but also in *Canal*. All through his career Wajda remained a cinematic representative of Polish national consciousness rather than a representative of modernism in Polish cinema, even though the films of his short modernist period, roughly between 1966 and 1972, are among the fine examples of Eastern European modernism: *Landscape after Battle* (1970), *The Birch Wood* (1970), and *The Wedding* (1973).

Polish film critic Boleslav Michalek's discussion of Wajda illustrates the importance that has been attached to Wajda's works within Polish culture:

> Wajda hears at once the echoes of his country's history and the sounds of its life. He listens for the tones, harmonious or dissonant, and thus captures his special cinematic music. His identity as a Pole has only from time to time permitted him to detach himself enough to make something like a calm meditation on human existence.[15]

Hence, for Polish audiences Wajda has not been a modernist auteur first and foremost; his significance was rather as a key figure of the Polish intelligentsia. It was in fact through Wajda's films that cinema started to play an important role in Poland's intellectual life, which made him nationally and

14. Here is what Polish film critic Jerzi Plazewksi wrote in 1958 about Kawalerowicz: "The track Kawalerowicz took is risky. The fact that he couldn't stabilize himself within a well-defined style, and his inclination for experimentation will not allow him perhaps still for a long time to reach the same perfection that was easier for authors who have already found their own ways, like in the case of Ford, Munk, and Wajda." Jerzi Plazewksi, "Le jeune cinéma polonaise," *Cahiers du cinéma* 79 (January 1958): 26. Plazewski wrote this probably at the very moment Kawalerowicz was about to find his "own way."

15. Michalek and Turaj, *The Modern Cinema of Poland*, 129.

internationally a kind of "most important" filmmaker, and the embodiment of national culture in cinema. Of course, Wajda shared this idea about the distinguished role of art and cinema in national culture: "It is difficult to understand Poland, but we, Polish artists, were there to confront this impossible task."[16] A very similar importance was associated to Hungarian filmmaker Jancsó five–six years later and Tarkovsky about fifteen years later.

The Year 1959

There is no question that the years 1957–1961 were a revolutionary period in almost all important national cinemas in Europe, and that the changes unfolding in this period sooner or later led to modern cinema everywhere. However, if one wants to find a specific turning point where modern cinema first broke through, one has to point to 1959, and to two countries, Italy and France.

For a broad historical approach, singling out one specific year as the start of modernism may seem too scrupulous or even narrow-minded. Modernist films followed one another so quickly in this period that it may seem just inappropriate not to take into consideration films released over the next or the previous year or to say that this or that year was the specific turning point in modern film history. The release date of a movie does not take into account that film production begins well before its release. But just because things were happening so fast at the turn of the 1960s, it seems very important to try to determine primacy. Stylistic, narrative, and technical inventions in film history have always spread very quickly. Proliferation of filmmaking itself was basically a matter of one single year all over the world. Although the technology of filmmaking as well as different forms of watching motion pictures were known already in the 1880s, the institution of cinema as we know it today was publicly introduced in late 1895 in Paris. And by the end 1896 filmmaking appeared in Japan, India, Egypt, and Russia. To remember December 28, 1895, is important not only for the sake of historical memory also but because without it we would not understand why cinema conquered the world in one year and precisely why this occurred in 1896, and not in 1894 or in 1904.

A similar thing occurred in the late 1950s. The advent of modernism was prepared in many ways during the 1950s, but we cannot find any massive presence of modern styles before 1959. And because so many films appeared

16. Andrzej Wajda, *Kino i reszta swiata* (Krakow: Znak, 2000).

or were put into production in this particular year that had something substantially new in their styles and in the narrative solutions, filmmakers and critics attending the major European art film festivals (Berlin, Cannes, and Venice) spread the news very quickly that new art cinema had arrived. And because there was a young generation of filmmakers eager to find new solutions in many countries, these solutions very quickly became general and common practices during the following couple of years all over Europe. So, it makes a big difference with respect to a film's position in the modernist movement and to the assessment of its originality whether it was completed or screened in 1959, 1960, or 1961.

The year 1959 was one of the most eventful years in the history of the modern art film. At the Cannes Film Festival, Truffaut and Resnais broke through with their first features, *The 400 Blows*, and *Hiroshima, My Love*, respectively. It is then that the label "new wave" was born.[17] True, the Palme d'Or prize was awarded to Marcel Camus's *Black Orpheus*. Camus was another young director, although not a real newcomer as this was already his second film. An ethnographer, Jean Rouch presented his first cinéma verité film, *I, a Negro*. Bresson finished his *Pickpocket*, which became a cornerstone of modern French cinema not so much because it represented that many innovations as compared to *A Man Escaped* but because his style became more consistent and radical, which contributed to Bresson being acknowledged as a modern auteur.[18] As Louis Malle wrote in his review: "*Pickpocket* is the first film of Robert Bresson. The ones he has made previously were only drafts. That is to say, provided that we acknowledge the value of this filmmaker, the release of *Pickpocket* is one of the four or five big dates in the history of cinema."[19]

Fellini made his scandalous modern melodrama *La dolce vita*, against which the Roman Catholic Church of Italy protested. Antonioni completed *L'avventura* this same year, for which he was heralded as a great modern filmmaker as in the case of Bresson. A style was discovered that was already

17. French film critic Pierre Billard borrowed this category in 1959 from an earlier article of Françoise Giroud (*Express*, October 3, 1953).

18. This is how French filmmakers and critics characterized the role of *Pickpocket* in French cinema. Olivier Assayas: "This is a film that has marked French cinema in an indelible manner, more than any other film of Bresson, and it continues to have this power. *Pickpocket* does not change, and will have for sure the same effect on today's spectator." Serge Tubiana: "This is the most typical and most radical film of all Bresson films in it *mise-en-scène*." "Table Ronde: Autour de Pickpocket," *Cahiers du cinéma* 416 (Feb. 1989): 26.

19. Louis Malle, review of *Pickpocket*, *Arts* (30 December 1959).

around for some time, but not in such a concentrated manner. *L'avventura* caused another kind of scandal when it was booed by the audience at the 1960 Cannes festival. It was, however, received in Paris shortly thereafter to great acclaim.[20] And finally, later in the year, Godard started shooting and completed *Breathless*.

Strictly speaking Resnais's *Hiroshima* had the unquestionable primacy of most consistently introducing modernism into art cinema by applying the *nouveau roman* narrative technique. Eric Rohmer immediately grasped the importance of what was happening: not only young and new filmmakers emerged, but with Resnais, modern cinema was born:

> [H]e is the first modern filmmaker of the sound cinema. There were a lot of modern filmmakers during the silent era: Eisenstein, the expressionists, and Dreyer too. . . . But I think that sound cinema has been perhaps more classic than the silent film. . . . *Hiroshima* is the first modern film of the sound cinema.[21]

As Rohmer was writing this, Godard was preparing *Breathless*, Antonioni was already shooting *L'avventura*, and Fellini and Kawalerowicz were involved in their own first modern works. By the end of the year Resnais was not alone as the "first modern filmmaker of the sound cinema."

It occurs not very often in the history of art that one single year brings so many radical novelties that determine considerably the evolution of a genre or a style. But that is exactly what happened in 1959 in European cinema. These films were not only emblematic films of modern cinema, but represented almost all the important trends of modernism that would later spread throughout Europe and the world. Not only did modern films appear, but they also represented most of the aspects of the modern form, so that almost the whole spectrum of modern cinema was opened up at once.

Resnais powerfully introduced a narrative form transposed from *nouveau roman*, which became the basis of the mental journey genre developed further mainly by Robbe-Grillet and Tarkovsky. Camus initiated a stylized form, which utilized certain elements of a cultural mythology, and this was developed mainly by Italian, Polish, Hungarian, and Georgian auteurs primarily during the third period of modernism. Antonioni introduced his radical alienated minimalism within the form of the modern melodrama, which was further developed by Jancsó, Angelopoulos, and Wenders.

20. Two months later, perhaps because of the scandal, this film made more than 200,000 entries in Paris in a couple of weeks, and became a favorite art film of the French audience.

21. Eric Rohmer, *Cahiers du Cinéma* 97 (July 1959): 4.

Godard and Truffaut introduced their respective versions of the new wave, and both of them were extremely influential virtually all over Europe but most particularly in the films of Vilgot Sjöman in Sweden, Alexander Kluge and R. W. Fassbinder in Germany, and Bernardo Bertolucci in Italy. Finally, Jean Rouch introduced cinéma vérité, the self-reflexive version of documentary realism that had the greatest impact after 1966 especially in Germany and Hungary. With some new phenomena adding to them during the next couple of years, those were the basic forms of modern cinema at least until 1965, which became the seed of the different national or regional versions born in other national cinemas.

Forms of Romantic Modernism

In many respects young modern cinema's attitude vis-à-vis classical norms is reminiscent of nineteenth-century romanticism as a transitional form between classical and modernist aesthetic realms. This was the period—when it was still visible how modern cinema grew out of the classical forms—where transition from classical to modern cinema can be best detected. The first three years represented the most emotional period of modern cinema, which set the standards for a certain subjective and personal approach to filmmaking. Modern cinema was built on classical forms that lent to the expression of personal and subjective auteurial attitudes, like romantic melodrama or film noir. It introduced forms of subjective and auteur-centered narration in serious as well as self-reflective and ludic forms. It introduced mental abstraction of narration favoring such mental dimensions as dreams, memories, and fantasy. In many ways it identified historical and social reality with the personal and subjective perception of this reality.

At the same time, in most cases early modern cinema respected rules of classical narration. Its forms were aimed to overtly destabilize those rules rather than to replace them by others. Most stylistic innovations of the early years were based on parodying, twisting, or ignoring some classical stylistic or narrative rules. The two most radical forms of this destabilization were created by *Hiroshima, My Love* and *Breathless*. *Hiroshima*'s main innovation was to subordinate the chronology of the plot to a free association of a voice-over narrator's text; *Breathless*'s main innovation was to subordinate narrative causality and continuity to emotional states expressed by the narrative. Because early modern films opposed mainly classical studio-style lighting and composition, as well as unnatural theatrical acting, in this respect the farthest they could go was to approach neorealism's naturalist style, but as most modernist directors opposed neorealism, the visual quality and

acting style of romantic modernism remained rather traditional. The big change in this respect was brought about by *Last Year at Marienbad* in 1961 and by *8 1/2* in 1963. This is when modern cinema went beyond the romantic critique of classical norms and established its own self-reflective norms referring to an alternative aesthetic universe.

The early modern works were sentimental and sometimes even full of pathos. Truffaut made his most brilliant romantic melodrama, *Jules and Jim*, in 1961 after having made a melancholic "film noir," *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960). Godard made his most romantic and adventure melodramas in his early years: *Breathless*, *A Woman Is a Woman*, *The Little Soldier* (banned for political reasons, and released only in 1963),[22] and *My Life to Live* (1962). Resnais's *Hiroshima* was his most sentimental love story, and *Last Year at Marienbad*, with all its pathetic theatricality, was the straight manifestation of the struggle between classical narrative order and its subjective subversion. Louis Malle made his virtually only new wave film, which was also the only self-reflective comedy within the new wave: *Zazie in the Subway* (1960). Even the "cooler" version of Antonioni's early modern cinema was more emotional in these years. *L'avventura* and *La notte* were romantic and passionate modern melodramas as compared to his films made after 1962, *Eclipse* or *The Red Desert*, not to mention his later films. Bergman joined the modernist movement with the first part of his lyrical "trilogy" (*Through a Glass Darkly*, 1961), and Pasolini's particular version of post-neorealism was an almost religiously emotional approach to outcasts and morally corrupted proletarians in *Accattone!* (1961) and also in *Mamma Roma* (1962).

Compared to Wajda's and Chukhrai's classical and heroic films of the time, the new modern films seemed rather alienated, or even cynical. Yet a *Le Monde* critic compared *Ballad of a Soldier* to Antonioni's and Fellini's films, saying, "From time to time it is healthy to see normal people on the screen,"[23] and the overwhelming majority of these films at certain points reached an emotional pathos that was later missing in modern cinema, especially after 1966.

One can trace the vanishing of romantic pathos especially in the films of Godard, Antonioni, and Resnais. Godard never ceases to be personal in his

22. Still, the film became known in a way, at least in France, since the transcript of its soundtrack as well as many stills from the film were published. Jean-Luc Godard, "Le Petit Soldat (bande paroles), I," *Cahiers du cinéma* 119 (May 1961) 23–37 and (June 1961).

23. Cited in Josephine Woll, *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw* (London and New York: Tauris, 2000). 97.

films, but the emotional pathos that reaches its peak in *My Life to Live* (1962) disappears after *Pierrot le fou* (1965). Resnais became expressly distanced from his characters starting from *Muriel* (1963), and Antonioni becomes a "distant observer" as well starting with *Eclipse* (1962). Fellini lost much of the highly emotional character of his earlier films already in *La dolce vita* (a contemporary critic called this film a "documentary without a subject"),[24] and even though he too kept a certain personal voice in his films all through his career (not as much as Godard, though), the highly ornamental and abstract style he used starting from *Juliet of the Spirits* (1964) made him also a distanced, self-ironic, and dispassionate auteur especially in his most autobiographical films, like *8 1/2* or *Fellini's Casanova.* In Bergman's career, too, we can see a strong alienated antiemotional period between *The Silence* (1963) and *Cries and Whispers* (1972).

Genre and Narration in the Early Years

Early modern cinema can be grouped around certain story types or genres. The overwhelming majority of these films' stories were built up around some kind of *search:* mental search in Resnais's films, *Hiroshima, My Love* and *Last Year at Marienbad;* physical search or investigation in Antonioni's *L'avventura*, Godard's *Breathless*, Rohmer's *The Sign of Leo*, and Kawalerowicz's *The Night Train.* There were other films in which the wandering of the characters was not motivated by a specific goal. Either the character's moving around seemed self-contained and aimless, or it seemed motivated by a life situation in which the character has a definable or indefinable feeling of discomfort or lack: Pasolini's *Accattone!* Malle's *Zazie in the Subway*, Godard's *The Little Soldier,* Antonioni's *La notte*, Fellini's *La dolce vita*, Varda's *Cléo from 5 to 7,* and Rouch's *I, a Negro.*

These films' narratives were highly episodic. Even if they were focusing on one character, the narration went through small, short, loosely connected episodes. Episodic narration was not new to cinema, but these films used it in a way developed during neorealism. It comes as no surprise therefore that mainly Italian films were constructed that way, but Truffaut, Rohmer, and increasingly Godard also (except for *Breathless*) used episodic narration as their basic narrative constructions.

Episodic narration works basically on the variation principle. Given is a theme, a situation, or a conflict, and the film unfolds following a series of

24. Jean-Louis Laugier, "Il dolce Fellini," *Cahiers du cinéma* 109 (July 1960): 47.

variations on the basic theme. The end of a story is reached, then, not when a mission is accomplished or when a conflict is resolved but when the basic situation has gone through a sufficient number of variations to consider it fully explored. An episodic structure can be both of *circular* and *spiral* forms. Basically all the genres utilized by modern cinema were available for circular or spiral episodic narration.

Episodic construction made another form fashionable in this period: episode films, or sketch films consisting of a series of short films made by different auteurs. This was started in Italy right in the 1950s, and one of the earliest films of the kind was made in Italy in 1953 as a joint project of Antonioni, Risi, Fellini, Zavattini, and Lattuada, called *Love in the City.* Many of them were international productions, mainly including French and Italian auteurs. The main episode films of the period include *Love at Twenty* (1961), *Rogopag* (1963), *Of Wayward Love* (1962), *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1962), *The Most Beautiful Swindlers* (1963); *Six in Paris* (1964); *The Witches* (1967); *The Oldest Profession* (1967), *Far from Vietnam* (1967), *Capriccio all'italiana* (1968), *Boccaccio '70* (1962), and *Spirits of the Dead* (1969). Such episode films can be regarded as the manifestation of modern serial construction of narrative in the classical form. The film's coherence is not provided by the space-time unity of a story but by the conceptual coherence of a topic of which different narrative variations can be conceived.

Narrative conventions, especially conventions of genres, were many times taken as the subject of playful irony or parody. Explicit genre parodies did not appear in this very early stage of modernism, yet *Zazie* could be regarded as a parody of realism but also of new wave antirealism. *Breathless* and *Shoot the Piano Player* could be regarded as parodies of gangster movies. The early films of Godard, Truffaut, and Chabrol were all interwoven with narrative irony. Their endings best exemplify that they do not take too seriously consistency in dramatic construction. And this is true not only in their very early period. Most of their new wave films contain a surprising, unexpected, and haphazard tragedy at the close of the story. Conventional dramatic construction would not allow unprepared tragic events to happen at the end of a story. A conventional narrative could start with an accidental death, but it could not end with an unprepared death of the main hero as that would leave the story ending accidental and irrational. Essentially, that is what happens in *Breathless*, *Shoot the Piano Player, The Cousins*, *Jules and Jim*, and even later in *My Life to Live* or in *The Soft Skin.* Even when tragedy lingers above the main character, as in *Breathless*, we do not expect it to come from where it in fact does: from Patricia, who tells the police where they can find Michel. In the other films, there is clearly no way to foretell that the

main characters will accidentally die at the end.[25] With this ending these directors introduced a certain amount of arbitrariness into narration, liberating themselves as well as future modernist directors (and postmodern directors, too, for that matter) from the heaviest constraint of narration: a dramatic construction driven by necessities of realist likelihood. These films make *chance* the most important dramatic element of modern narration, which survives modernism and becomes perhaps even more important in postmodern narration.

The apparent arbitrariness of these endings always has a certain ironic and astounding effect, suggesting that the filmmaker can do whatever he feels appropriate regardless of whether it seems dramatically correct or not. At the same time this suggests that dramatic correctness is not something that should be taken too seriously, and apparently incorrect constructions can be as efficient as "correct" ones. However, this only changed the meaning of dramatic "correctness." From now on, chance became a "legal," almost required, ingredient in motivating important turns in the plot, just like unmotivated or loose endings.

At this point "heavy," self-reflective, narratives had not emerged in early modern films, but there was already a good quantity of self-consciousness in many of the films' playfulness as well as in explicit ironic self-reflective gags scattered throughout. To evoke just a few such gags: the main character's outcry in *Zazie:* "What do you want, this is the *nouvelle vague!*" or Belmondo's tirade addressed to the audience while driving his car in *Breathless*, "If you don't like the mountains, if you don't like the sea, if you don't like the sun, go to hell!" Another example is Bruno, citing Raoul Coutard, Godard's cinematographer in *The Little Soldier:* "This is what my friend, Raoul Coutard, the most brilliant French cinematographer called "the law of the maximum pain in the neck. Every time I was ready to shoot, an unexpected event prevented me from doing so." And one can also think of the film posters of new wave films, such as *Shoot the Piano Player.* But one can also think of the gag in *A Woman Is a Woman* when Anna Karina walks through a certain door and is suddenly wearing different clothes.[26] Little self-reflective gags of this kind will be very fashionable during the 1960s all over Europe, but we have to distinguish them from the "essential" critical self-reflexivity introduced by Bergman in 1948 and reemerging in 1962 in Fellini's *8 1/2*.

25. On the accidental death in the endings of French new wave films and its relationship to expressionism, see my earlier work, *Metropolis, Paris* (Budapest: Képző művészeti Kiadó, 1992).

26. This gag is repeated by Tony Richardson in his *Tom Jones* (1966).

Sound and Image

Several spectacular techniques of stylistic abstraction were invented or reinvented in the early years of modern cinema. A common characteristic feature of new modern films was the way they tended to separate the information conveyed by the soundtrack from that conveyed by the images. Increasingly, soundtracks became an independent channel of information rather than a subordinate explanatory or accompanying element. This trend was started in the late 1940s with voice-over commentaries in literary adaptations and in film noirs.

In most modern films, noises, dialogues, voice-over commentaries, and music are not redundant, that is, they convey information independently of the visual or narrative information or they even oppose them. In later periods of modernism this went as far as to reduce the whole plot to a mere pretext for staging conversations or delivering verbal statements (by the characters or by the auteur himself), which does not refer directly to the dramatic situation (most of Godard's post-1967 films and the films of Straub, Huillet, and Duras). The film essay was the modern genre whose appearance was due to the separation of the dramatic situation and the soundtrack. In this genre the film's narrative structure becomes dependent on the unfolding of a verbal argumentation rather than on the dynamics of an action. Godard's *My Life to Live* (1962) can be regarded as the first manifestation of this genre in late modern cinema.

Separating sound from the image was an idea that emerged as the first reaction of early modern filmmakers in the very early period of sound cinema. In 1928 it was already Eisenstein' s view that only a contrapuntal use of sound could create real artistic effect in the sound film:

> The first experiments with sound must be directed towards its pronounced non-coincidence with the visual images. . . . This method of attack only will produce the requisite sensation, which will lead in course of time to the creation of a new "orchestral counterpoint" of sight-images and sound-images.[27]

Separation of "sound-images" and "sight-images" was realized first in modern cinema with regard to musical accompaniment. Usual background music was gradually developed into musical citations where the musical material had its own meaning independent of the dramatic function. During the 1950s, increasingly the traditional orchestral music was replaced by

27. Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov, "The Sound Film: A Statement from the USSR," in *Close Up* 3, no. 4 (Oct. 1928).

modern jazz. Modern jazz first of all evokes the atmosphere of "modernity," but, most importantly, provides a general atmosphere lingering on during the entire film rather than emphasizing dramatic changes. Thus musical accompaniment starts to function as an independent signifying system rather than as a subordinate element enhancing the effects of the plot. The best example of the role of modern jazz as citation music independent of the plot within early modern cinema is Louis Malle's *Elevator to the Gallows* (1959) with the musical score of Miles Davis.

Another, more minimalist solution can be found in Antonioni's *La notte*. Antonioni was known for not liking nondiegetic music.[28] Musical accompaniment, different types of jazz, is provided in the film by different diegetic sources, like radio or live orchestra, the sound of which can be heard beyond their locations. Antonioni uses musical accompaniment the opposite way that traditional narrative cinema does. Instead of using music to enhance dramatic tension, the role of Antonioni's musical accompaniment is to provide a general background atmosphere to scenes that *lack* dramatic tension. Music here is not a redundant dramatic element; it is rather an independent signifying channel pulling us into a smooth indifferent nondramatic atmosphere. Thus, when in the final scene Giovanni and Lidia start walking in the garden where the jazz band is still playing near the house, the music is loud. As they walk away from the band the music is naturally fading, and it is then that they start talking. Dramatic tension mounts as Lidia tells Giovanni that their friend is dead. Music stops. When they start talking about their relationship, music can be heard again. When this conversation is at its dramatic climax, the music fades away totally. It returns only during the final shot when the camera turns away from the agonizing couple. That is where diegetic music becomes nondiegetic for the first time in the film. Antonioni's music plays the role of signifying the indifferent nature of the characters' world, broken from time to time by moments of silence signifying the inexpressible nature of the underlying drama.

In the extreme case we find films in modern cinema where musical accompaniment is totally eliminated. In the early films of Jancsó, for example, the only "musical element" is the virtually continuous sound of the lark.

It is in *Hiroshima, My Love* that the first radical isolation of text and image can be found. The dramatic situation of the film provides an occasion for

28. According to Giovanni Fusco, Antonioni's composer, Antonioni could tolerate music in his film only if was strictly motivated by the situation. The one composed by Fusco "pushed him into a sometimes disconcerted nervousness." Cited by Pierre Leprohon in *Antonioni* (Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1969), 168.

the characters to give verbal commentaries on their memories, which are from time to time entirely disconnected from what we see on the screen. Sometimes it is even hard to tell if a text is meant to be diegetic or extradiegetic. It is Godard rather than Resnais, however, who will later radicalize the use of this device. In *The Little Soldier* voice-over narration already becomes quite independent from the dramatic events, while in *Band of Outsiders* it clearly dominates the plot. For example, there is a scene where Godard freezes the image so that he has time to tell a longer commentary. Real, disrupting separation of text and image occurs in *Two or Three Things I Know About Her.* In the second period of modernism the sound/image mismatch will be one of the essential devices of structural cinema as well as of political modernism.

Background and Foreground

An important stylistic innovation brought by modern films in the early years was something that I have already touched upon. It consists in isolating the characters from a realistically depicted background or creating an abstract or utterly artificial background setting. Separation of background and foreground is a technique of analytical minimalism. This technique can be best observed in modernism's relationship to representing landscape. The most spectacular motive of visual minimalism in modern cinema was locating the stories in devoid landscapes, creating the atmosphere of an abstract universe surrounding the characters, which was a stylistic element introduced into modern cinema by Rossellini and Antonioni, but it very soon appeared in the films of Bergman, too, and later became one of the most general visual commonplaces of modern cinema. Both Antonioni's technique of dealing separately with characters and landscape and Bergman's use of highly expressive settings have this effect. Both Bresson's and Godard's versions of radical discontinuity result in that the characters become detached from their surrounding. We can also mention, in spite of its classical deep-focus style, Kawalerowicz's *The Night Train,* since closed-situation drama is the most obvious way of isolating characters from their environment in space as well as in time. This tendency of isolating foreground and background is very significant, first, because it shows a characteristic deviation both from classical neorealist staging and from classical dramatic mise-en-scène. Second, it contributes to a general change of visual style in all sectors of cinema during the 1960s, the flattening of the image, or the disappearance of depth of stage taking effect visibly around the mid-1960s. The technique of Cinemascope obviously contributed largely to the

spreading to the general flat-image style of the 1960s.[29] This solution creates a certain "surface effect," whereby the characters move around in the environment as in front of an indifferent flat image rather than within a real space with which they can interact.

From our point of view here the disappearance of image depth is an important but secondary consequence of a deeper phenomenon discovered in one of modernism's fundamental trends, which aims at disrupting the organic relationship between characters and their environment. We will see that other modernist trends unfolding shortly after this initial phase do not play upon isolation of characters and background setting. A similar "surface effect" is reached by Fellini, Jancsó, Tarkovsky, Paradzhanov, and Pasolini, who are the first and most original representatives of a trend in which characters are reintegrated into their environment. We also have to mention in this respect the realist style of the new German cinema starting in the mid-1960, which in its own way also follows this trend of reintegrating characters into the environment. Nevertheless, this reintegration will not reestablish organic relationships between the environment and the characters. Instead, it makes the characters dissolve into their environment. In the ornamental trend the characters increasingly become ornamental elements of a general environment, while in the theatrical trend they become elements of a theatrical stage. Most typical examples of the former trend are Jancsó and Fellini, and for the latter, Fassbinder, Straub, Schmid, and Herzog. It is here that one can observe most clearly that a film's or a style's modernism is not dependent only upon simple realism or artificiality, nor on use of specific narrative or stylistic techniques. "Surface effect" is a fundamentally modernist conception that can be created by different means but always results in representing a dehumanized relationship between the individual and the environment.

To conclude, we can say that this period of modern European art cinema can be characterized predominantly by a romantic emotional pathos and a general return to the representation of everyday social reality. In many cases this was not accompanied by the appearance of modern forms. In Soviet, Polish, and British cinema the themes of everyday heroism and everyday rebellion were predominant and were represented in a classical visual and narrative style with a tendency to reach a kind of natural-looking social realism. With the exception of Jerzy Kawalerowicz, modern forms did not have too much effect on film production in these countries prior to 1962. In the films

29. The analysis of the flat-image style and Cinemascope is given by David Bordwell in *On the History of Film Style* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Figs. 53–56. Flat compositions: *8 ½* (Fellini), *The Red Desert* (Antonioni), *My Life to Live* (Godard), and *La dolce vita* (Fellini).

in which modernism in fact appeared—films of Resnais, Godard, Truffaut, Antonioni, Bresson—the same romantic emotionality prevailed in spite of the alienated representation of the characters and their environment.

From *Hiroshima* to *Marienbad:* Modernism and the Cinema of the Elite

Among the key auteurs of the beginning of late modernism, Alain Resnais stands out not only as the "first modern auteur of the cinema," as Eric Rohmer put it, but also as the auteur of the most radical modern film of the period, which has remained a sort of symbol of modern cinema ever since and which became also the watershed between the first and the second period of modernism. Resnais opened the modern era with *Hiroshima, My Love*, and gave great momentum to its second, mature period with *Last Year at Marienbad*. This film was declared a "Copernican revolution" by *Cahiers*,[30] the "*Demoiselles d'Avignon* of the cinema" by the prestigious French daily paper *Le Monde*, and "the death of papa's cinema" by Jean-Louis Bory.[31] *Marienbad* put an end to the transition between classical and modern cinema.

As mentioned above, the importance of *Last Year at Marienbad* is that it was the first to eliminate the difference between story and plot, thereby making the narration as an auteurial act the only interpretable texture of the film. As radical as it seemed at the time, from the point of view of the auteur's position *Hiroshima* remained part of the classical tradition. The narrator's text had a referent, the representation of which was dependent on the organization of the narrative, but it was distinguishable from it. In *Marienbad* everything is subjected to the act of narration, which becomes self-referential, and that is the basis of late modern critical reflexivity. It was in that film that the auteur became an omnipotent agent in the film, and it was not long before the auteur literally became the protagonist of his own film as well. It is in this sense that Fellini's *8 1/2*, released two years later, is the next key film of modern cinema.

We can consider the appearance of this self-contained referentiality as the definition of an important split within the European art-film industry. As I mentioned above and will return to below, following the mid-1970s an important split occurred in the European art-film industry. The development of the modernist art film bifurcates in two directions: one returns to classical rules of storytelling and to a careful, well-composed visual style, the other radicalizes the remnants of modernism into postmodernism. This

30. François Weyergans, "Dans le dédale," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 123 (September 1961): 27.
31. Cited by Benayoun, *Alain Resnais*, 86.

split starts here, with *Last Year at Marienbad* in 1961, when the first esoteric, entirely self-referential, antinarrative film of modernism appears. This split becomes more apparent after 1967 with the political radicalization of some modern auteurs, such as Godard, Bertolucci, Straub and Huillet, and Pasolini, and with the appearance of extreme forms of modern stylization in the films of Robbe-Grillet, early Fassbinder, Duras, or Eustache.[32] When classical art film becomes mainstream again in the 1980s, we can already speak about two institutionalized sectors of the European commercial art film: the classical art film industry and the commercial avant-garde. The first is epitomized by François Truffaut, István Szabó, Jane Campion, Bernardo Bertolucci, and Giuseppe Tornatore, the second by Peter Greenaway, Béla Tarr, Derek Jarman, and Nanni Moretti, to name just a few.

The appearance of modern cinema was the source of two illusions. The first illusion was that cinema would suppress the opposition between art films made for the few and popular films made for mass audiences. There would be no more difference between elite films and films for the masses; there will be only good films and bad films and aesthetic value judgment would work along the same principles for all audience categories. The second illusion was that modern films invalidate the hitherto crystallized habits of moviegoing by not responding to rules of genres. The ideology underlying this claim was that film, like other forms of art, will be liberated from historical, social, and political constraints and will be subject solely to general and abstract principles of modern art. These expectations were so widespread that even ordinary film reviews echoed them. Here is what we can read in 1960 with regard to modern films not fitting into traditional categories:

> The French audience—and the statistics prove this—do not go to cinema to laugh. They go there to see a good film. This phenomenon was born a little more than two years ago during the first upheaval of the new wave, but the first real manifestation of it was the release of *La strada*. . . . One realized suddenly with surprise that the triad: experimental theater, first-release theater, and neighborhood theater no longer made sense, and a film about which it used to be said that "It is for the Caumartin, or it is for the Pagode," could well have success at the Marignan, at the Colisée, or even at the Saint-Paul or at the Astor.[33]

Neither of these became reality. In terms of audience figures, even in the best years of modern art film there was a vast gulf between the so-called

32. Peter Wollen's idea about the "two avant-gardes" discussed in chapter 1 can be considered as the first theoretical reflection of this split.

33. Paris Presse, *L'Intrasigeant*, 20 September 1960.

"good films" and the most popular entertainment films. Some French new wave films did quite well, for example, 450,000 tickets were sold for *The 400 Blows*, but this was only half of what the most popular comedies made in the same year. And this situation subsisted only for a couple of years anyway. After 1962 the popularity of the new wave rapidly declined, and by the mid-sixties audience figures showed a consistent split between art films and genre films to the benefit of the latter. In 1966, the French film with the highest audience figures with 1,296,000 entries was a comedy, *Don't Look Now—We're Being Shot At*, by Gérard Oury. The second-highest-grossing French film in this year was *A Man and a Woman*, a romantic comedy with 708,000 tickets sold. Whereas, in the same year three Godard films were released (*La Chinoise*, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her, Made in U.S.A.*) and the three together sold not more than 241,000 tickets. Robbe-Grillet's *Trans-Europ-Express* had tickets sales reach 93,000, and Bresson's *Mouchette*, 86,000, while Rohmer's *The Collector* only 52,000.[34] Six major films of modernism together did not even approach the second most popular commercial French film of the year.

This tendency was even reinforced at the turn of the sixties and seventies, with the films of Jancsó, Straub and Huillet, Bergman, Paradzhanov, Tarkovsky, Makavejev, or the politically radical Godard. There appeared a much more abstract or esoteric variation of modernist art cinema that did not even have the ambition to attract large audiences. Modernism in the cinema not only did not break down the wall between commercial and art cinema, not only it did not dismiss genre filmmaking (or avant-garde filmmaking, for that matter), but it created an even more isolated elite version of the art film starting from the mid-1960s. From this point on there clearly existed three sectors of commercial cinema rather than two. If the 1920s brought the emergence of the noncommercial avant-garde as well as the art cinema institution in the commercial sector separated from the mass audience film industry, in the 1960s one can observe a split within commercial art-film practice itself: a highly esoteric form of the intermediate art film practice comes into being, which, nevertheless stays within the commercial circuit and for this reason must be distinguished from the avant-garde.[35] Research on the French movie system at the time detects clearly this split.[36] It observes the existence in France of three different commercial circuits: cinema

34. *Image et son* 212 (January, 1968): 82.

35. Peter Wollen identifies this group of films by splitting the category of the avant-garde in two.

36. "Cinéma bis, cinéma ter?" in *Image et son* 212 (1968): 89–94.

of the "elite," cinema of the "Saturday-night-quality-entertainment," and cinema of "low-quality-genre-entertainment." The first group screens auteur films, the second big-budget films with big stars, and the third cheap genre films. While the main issue from the early 1920s for art cinema was to distinguish itself from commercial entertainment, through the "intermediate category" as determined by Robert Spa and Germaine Dulac in the 1920s ("themes taken from real life," "based on the similarities with the days we live," "original by its conception and by the careful research for an art by the director," "commercial but not enough to please the nervous ignorants"), from the mid-1960s another distinction became necessary: between this intermediate art film and the new elite *film d'auteur,* while both distinguished themselves from cheap entertainment films.

The Production System of the "New Cinema"

In most countries we can find a specific funding system behind the development of European new cinemas. In France, Italy, Sweden and Germany, considerable reorganization of state film funding made it possible for art cinema to develop. In Eastern Europe, the film industry was entirely state-subsidized, so the appearance of modern cinema in these countries cannot be linked to a considerable change of the production system, although both in Poland and in Hungary some reorganization of the state studio system took place in the early 1960s.

With the exception of France, new systems of funding art cinema came into being after 1962—in 1963 in Sweden, in 1965 in Italy, and in 1967 in Germany—so basically the romantic period of modernism was still a product of a traditional film industry. France was the only country where the earliest emergence of the new cinema can be associated with the establishment of a substantial reorganization of state subsidies in the end of the 1950s, and the French new wave emerged in step with this reorganization. But the two phenomena had a very particular relationship.

The years 1960 and 1961 were the apogee of the new wave generation. French new wave auteurs established themselves in France and Europe as the representatives of the new modern cinema. New wave was rather successful financially as well in its critical reception. But this situation did not last long. By 1962 the films of the new wave auteurs lost more than half of their audience, and they became the cinema of the elite. More importantly, they lost also their financial profitability, which in 1959 and 1960 had attracted producers to work with young experimenting filmmakers. As Luc Moullet explains:

> The audience of '58–'60 welcomed *nouvelle vague* too warmly, which was due basically to curiosity, to snobbism, and to the deficiencies of the New Wave films of the time. This success gave credibility to the commercial viability of the new directors who, to show that they are not interested in commercial success, decided to make "avant-garde" films with no compromise whatsoever. (*The Little Soldier, The Good Time Girls, Marienbad, The Season for Love*, etc.), or films for neighborhoods hostile to the snob audience to whom their initial success was due (*Shoot the Piano Player*). Curiosity is over, box office of years '60–'61 falls considerably.[37]

Other than the spectacular audience figures, which were spectacular really only in three or four cases, the new wave was attractive because the directors were ready to make films with a very low budget and producers had money to spend in 1960–1961. This phenomenon is worth a short excursus.

René Prédal, in his *50 ans du cinéma français*,[38] already refutes the general idea that the success of the new wave was due to the introduction of a special sponsoring system, *avance sur recette*. This system was introduced in the summer of 1959 by André Malraux, then minister of culture, and aimed in fact to support the emerging young French cinema by granting advances on presentation of the script rather than rewarding the finished work. However, the emergence of the new wave cannot be attributed to *avance sur recette:* for one thing, films finished or started in 1959 obviously could not benefit from this support. But secondly, and this is an even more important fact, the filmmakers belonging to the group of the *Cahiers du cinéma,* the "real new wave," Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rivette, and Rohmer were never granted this support before 1965. The first *avance* was granted to Truffaut in 1968,[39] to Rohmer in 1967, to Godard in 1965, Chabrol for the only time in 1960, and Rivette never in the 1960s. It can be asserted that French state did not support the new wave but that it rather supported the other, in certain ways concurrent, group, the "rive gauche" or left bank (Resnais, Robbe-Grillet, Varda, Etaix).[40] Granted, state support went to young cinema but only to

37. Luc Moullet in "Trois points d'économie (Eléments pour un dossier)," *Cahiers du cinéma* 138 (December 1962): 86.

38. René Prédal, *50 ans du cinéma français* (Paris: Nathan, 1996).

39. In the Lamousse Report on the functioning of the Centre Nationale de Cinématographie, Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* appears as a beneficiary of *avance sur recette*. However, this film was granted support only after it was finished.

40. The two groups highly respected each other's films and were not hostile to each other in person either. But as Rohmer would say jokingly: "Thank God, he [Resnais] remains on the left bank of the Seine and we on the right bank." Rohmer in *Cahiers du cinéma* 97 (July 1959): 14.

certain representatives of young cinema. Apparently it was directed at those young filmmakers who, as modernist as they were, followed a rather literary filmmaking tradition. In a certain way, this was inherent in the logic of the system. That is the point Luc Moullet made at a roundtable discussion in 1962—that the advance system is favorable to projects whose quality can be assessed prior to its realization. That is to say, it favors those having a well-prepared script. The improvisational style of the new wave and the finesse of mise-en-scène and camerawork are qualities that are obviously more difficult to judge in the written script.[41] In 1965 new wave directors were already disillusioned about the system. Jacques Doniol-Valcroze made a straightforward statement criticizing the decision makers of the commission: "[T]heir decisions are often perverse inasmuch as this Commission diverges from its originally stated duty, which is to help the difficult films and not those likely to become successful."[42] Godard and Truffaut held very similar opinions. Thus, the sheer existence of the great period of "hard core" new wave was entirely due to the audacity of the producers and not to state support, which mostly went to sponsor commercial productions.

Nonetheless, in a very odd way *avance sur recette* had a beneficial impact on new wave too.[43] It was due to interference with another support system, the "quality prime" established in 1953 that rewarded producers after having made a "quality film." As the cultural administration did not want the two support systems to overlap, the producers had to reinvest the money they received from a "quality prime" award, before they could apply for financial support in the new system. And the deadline was June 30, 1961. And who could they spend their money on? Naturally, on young filmmakers, who were not granted the advance support, and were willing to make low-budget films. And this is the period, between 1959 and 1962, when most of the important films of the new wave were born.

The irony is that almost a decade later the German state subsidy system dedicated to helping art cinema went astray in quite a similar way. As a result of the effort of young German filmmakers, a subsidy system was put into place in 1967 to help finance the development of new German art cinema. After a couple of years, however, it turned out that the great majority of state sponsorship went to film projects with a prospect of good profitabil-

41. Moullet in "Trois points d'économie (Eléments pour un dossier)," 99.

42. Jacques Doniol-Valcroze in "Qui? Pourquoi? Comment? Questionnaire," *Cahiers du cinéma* 161–162 (January 1965): 31.

43. See Prédal's comments on *avance sur recette* and the new wave, *50 années de cinéma français*, 262–265.

ity rather than to those without that prospect. Except for the first couple of years new German cinema was never entirely sponsored by the state subsidy system. More than that, in response to pressure from producers, the system was altered after a few years so that commercial films could take more advantage of it.[44] The difference between the French and the German cases is that the French system did not need to be altered in order to favor commercially more viable projects.

44. For a detailed discussion of the German subsidy system, see Hans Günther Plfaum and Hans Helmut Prinzler, *Cinema in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1983).

: 17 :
Established Modernism, 1962–1966

Western Europe around 1962

By 1962 modern cinema became a widely accepted movement throughout Europe. It had already passed its romantic "sturm und drang" period, and its innovations represented already a new norm for the second wave of young directors debuting in 1962–1963. This was the period in which a cool aesthetic self-reflection of filmmaking as the trendiest intellectual and artistic occupation appeared, and when modernism's self-reflexivity became increasingly important. And this was the period also when the first important achievements of modern Eastern European cinema appeared. By 1963 modernism conquered almost all segments of European art cinema.

As I pointed out in the previous chapter, there was a certain cohabitation between the classical and modernist norms between 1958 and 1963 even in the films of the "new directors." Many great films of this period were hardly or not at all touched by the modernist momentum. The important feature films coming out of the Free Cinema movement in England—*Room at the Top* (Jack Clayton, 1959), *Taste of Honey* (Tony Richardson, 1961), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Karel Reisz, 1962), and *This Sporting Life* (Lindsay Anderson, 1963)—bore no significant stylistic influence of modernism. It was not until Richardson's third film made in 1962, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner,* that conscious recognition of the modernist turn by a British film registers.

The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner is an important contribution to the confirmation and establishing of the modernist norm rather than bringing some kind of innovation to it. Modernism in Richardson's film mostly amounts to the tribute it pays to the French new wave, and most specifically, to Truffaut's *The 400 Blows.* It even could be interpreted as an English version or a continuation of Truffaut's film. Its story starts where Truffaut's

film ends: with the running of a young man in a penitentiary institution for minors (even though Richardson's hero is five–six years older that Truffaut's). His family background is very similar to Antoine's (except that his father dies), and in the scene when the two friends break into a bakery, one of them wants to steel a typewriter—an obvious reference to Truffaut's film. Richardson ends his film the same way Truffaut does, with a freeze frame. Using fast motion in some scenes is also a reminder of Truffaut.

The film's narrative is basically linear, but it is systematically interrupted by representation of the past as remembered by the protagonist, but there is no narrative commentary to the change of time frame. In 1962 it was considered quite natural that a film jump back and forth between past and present without specially calling attention to the time shift, which gives an impression of a merger between past and present, a technique introduced by *Hiroshima, My Love* and associated with the "rive gauche" style.

In Italy three new directors debuted in 1962, who gave new momentum to Italian modern cinema: Pasolini with *Accattone!* Bertolucci with *The Grim Reaper,* and Olmi with *The Job.*[1] All three films go back to the neorealist source in one way or another, but one can also see their original, personal approach to this tradition, which all of them soon left behind.

Although Olmi and Pasolini did not modernize the neorealist tradition in the way Bertolucci did with a parallel narrative structure, the "professional exercise" in both cases became distinguishable and personalized enough to make them stand out from the ordinary Italian film industry of the time. In both cases a certain amount of symbolism and individualized characters as well as mobile camerawork (especially in Pasolini's film) distinguished these films within the canon.

Germany's case was rather particular. In early 1965 an article appeared in *Cahiers du cinéma* reporting on the situation in German cinema, which started with this statement: "Everybody agrees about the nonexistence of German cinema—the Germans themselves are the first to agree."[2] Although the very first achievements of the new German cinema were not realized until 1965 (*Not Reconciled* by Jean-Marie Straub and *It* by Ulrich Schamoni), a movement for the renewal of German cinema was formed, which came out with a manifesto at the Oberhausen Film Festival in February 1962, which

1. Other debuting Italian directors between 1960 and 1963 include Marco Ferreri, Florestani Vancini, Vittorio De Seta, Franco Brusati, Bittorio Caproli, Ugo Gregoretti, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, Valentino Orsini, Giuliano Mondaldo, Tinto Brass, Gianfranco De Bosio, Lina Wermüller, Damiano Damiani, Giuseppe Fina, and Ettore Scola.

2. Michel Delahaye, "Allemagne ciné zero," *Cahiers du cinéma* 163 (February 1965): 59.

made this year noteworthy regarding the renewal of the German cinema as well.

Perhaps it was in West Germany more than anywhere else that the emergence of a new generation together with a new or modern cinema appeared as a revolution or a break with the past. Even in France, where the new cinema suddenly inundated the French film industry, it did not sweep away old-fashioned filmmakers such as Jean-Pierre Melville, André Cayatte, Jacques Becker, Marcel Carné, René Clément, and Claude Autant-Lara. They continued to work and remained respected filmmakers. Most importantly, some of the new wave directors themselves, like Truffaut or Chabrol, starting in the middle of the 1960s returned in one way or another to traditional "quality" filmmaking. New wave was a revolutionary phenomenon, but did not provoke a complete break with the past. Modern Italian cinema was even more organically attached to the tradition of the 1940s and 1950s. In all other countries discussed above (Poland, Soviet Union, Sweden, Britain, Hungary, Czechoslovakia), the emergence of modern cinema was a matter of a slow evolution that began in the late 1950s and unfolded by 1962. West German cinema, by contrast, collapsed spectacularly in early 1960. In 1961, the biggest and oldest German film production company still in business, went bankrupt. And what is more, no Federal Film Prize was awarded because of the poor general quality of German cinema as stated by the minister of interior. The Oberhausen Manifesto was a reaction to this situation. Young filmmakers proclaimed the old cinema "dead." "We believe in the new one," said the manifesto, but in Germany there was no "new cinema" at all. New German cinema did not appear before 1966, so what they meant by this was basically new cinema of France and Italy. And when after a long barren period, the German new wave emerged as a great cinematic revolution of international significance and took over the West German art-film industry, in its first films it clearly manifested a predominantly French influence. But whereas the French new wave represented the cream of French filmmaking for about six years, the new German cinema represented almost the whole of West German art-film-making for at least sixteen years.

The mere fact that in 1961 no prize-worthy German films were made probably was not enough reason for young short-film-makers to issue a revolutionary manifesto the next year and declare a certain "old cinema" dead. If they had meant only the state of German cinema, the manifesto would have been rather wishful thinking since not many things happened in the German film industry during the following couple of years either. The twenty-six filmmakers who signed the Oberhausen Manifesto in 1962 were obviously much more inspired by what was happening around them in the world than

by what was happening in German cinema at the time. They knew very well the achievements of new modern cinema and considered it not only as a national phenomenon of France or Italy but as a general transfiguration of art cinema. It was not the new German cinema that appeared in 1962 with the manifesto, it was rather that modern art cinema as the new international norm was acknowledged and declared as such by the twenty-six German filmmakers. It would have been simply unimaginable for a young filmmaker living in the center of Europe not to notice that "old cinema" was dead not only in Germany, especially if one takes into consideration the direct, personal connections. Three of the new German cinema filmmakers came from France. Jean-Marie Straub as well as his partner and co-auteur Danièle Huillet were born in France and arrived in Germany in the late 1950s. During the mid-1950s Straub worked with many French filmmakers, among them Rivette and Bresson. Volker Schlöndorff moved to Paris at the age of seventeen in 1956, studied at Institut des Hautes Études Cinématographiques, so he grew up with the new wave. Moreover, he worked as an assistant in more than one new wave film, including Malle's *Zazie* and Resnais's *Marienbad*. Alexander Kluge was also a film critic and film theoretician, so he understood completely what he meant when he signed the sentence, "the old cinema is dead."

In 1962 a manifesto dedicated to a renewal of art cinema was published in Sweden. A young writer and film critic, Bo Widerberg, published a book titled *Visionen i svensk film* ("Visions in Swedish cinema").[3] Obviously inspired by the example of Godard and Truffaut, Widerberg harshly attacked traditional Swedish films of the 1950s, basically with the same arguments as Truffaut in his own attacks against French cinema of the same period. This is how Widerberg summarizes his opinion: "The producers are half cowards, the scriptwriters have a provincial brain, and the directors are incompetent and cannot make real art out of these ideas." Like Truffaut, Widerberg had already made short films when he published this book and was eager to start his feature film career, which occurred in 1963.

At the same time some important changes took place also in the Swedish film industry, too. In 1961 Ingmar Bergman became the artistic advisor for Svensk Filmindustri after the company's chief executive officer died and ceded his place to an old friend of Bergman's. The company set off the career of young directors like Hans Abramson and Vilgot Sjöman. But most important was the change that affected the whole industry. In 1963 the Swedish government established the Swedish Film Institute, sponsored through a

3. Bo Widerberg, *Visionen i svensk film* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1962).

tax imposed on ticket sales. The Institute became the most important center for film production, distribution, research, archiving, and education. This gave immense momentum to the renewal of Swedish cinema. Not counting Bergman's own films, each year between 1962 and 1966 saw at least one outstanding accomplishment of new the Swedish cinema: 1962, Sjöman's *The Mistress;* 1963, Bo Widerberg's *Raven's End;* 1964, Hans Magnus Lindgren's *Dear John;* 1965, Jörn Donner's *Adventure Starts Here;* and 1966, Ian Troell's *Here Is Your Life.*

The year 1962 was important in the life of the French new wave too. Many of the young directors (especially Resnais, Godard, and Truffaut) had already enjoyed considerable international success and had already completed several films (Godard, four; Chabrol, five; and Truffaut, three). They could consider themselves as established directors and their movement as having gained enough importance, so that it could not be ignored. In a way, they also considered that the new wave as a "wave" was over, or that it had lost its momentum after its peak in 1960. The novelty of the new wave was fading, not the least because their second or third films did not do financially as well as their first films. However, the year 1962 brought some important successes again for the new wave (*Jules and Jim, Cléo from 5 to 7*), which discredited for good the argument that the new wave was but a short term upheaval and that their representatives were not to be taken seriously as professional filmmakers.

All this incited *Cahiers du cinéma* to publish at the end of the year a special issue dedicated entirely to the French new wave with the declared goal to support the movement in gaining more terrain in the French film industry. The movement of a suddenly emerging mass of newcomer young filmmakers insisting to obliterate conventional filmmaking and establish a new order had already passed away. And even if the "old wave" was still in place, the new wave continued in many ways. It established itself as a new and productive norm of filmmaking; good for not only one or two masterpieces but capable of starting a series of probably not so spectacular yet well-made quality new-wave films (films by Truffaut, Varda, and Chabrol after 1962). It also incited some writers to try their hands at filmmaking (Robbe-Grillet and Duras), and as far as Godard was concerned, new wave simply continued to exist basically unchanged at least until 1967. As a matter of fact, most of the best-known Godard films of his pre-1978 period were created between 1962 and 1967: *My Life to Live* (1962), *The Riflemen* (1963), *Contempt* (1963), *Band of Outsiders* (1964), *A Married Woman* (1964), *Alphaville* (1965), *Pierrot le fou* (1965), *Masculine-Feminine* (1966), *Made in U.S.A.* (1966), *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1966), *Week-end* (1967), and *La Chinoise* (1967). French new

wave was a very diverse phenomenon right from the start, and after 1962, when it ceased to be a movement, it turned into a source of different modern trends and individual modern styles of new French and European art cinema.

After 1962 important aesthetic achievements completely ignoring the modernist paradigm became extremely scarce. Henceforth for a certain period of time no serious artistic accomplishment could be imagined without at least some amount of modernism in it. The new narrative and visual solutions became norms, and they started to develop different variations. Even if a film was made according to the classical paradigm, some small details would remind the viewer of the director's awareness of the "norm." A good example is Elmar Klos and Ján Kadár's excellent film *The Shop on Main Street* (1965), a very classical realist-style narrative. Still, the director finishes the film with an abstract imaginary scene, which cannot be related to any of the characters' state of mind, as though Klos and Kadar, like Richardson, simply paid tribute to modernism without wanting to work according to its norms. It appears that the evolutionary claim about modernism as the summit of film art in fact proves to be valid during this period alone. Neither before nor after can art cinema be identified with the modernist movement.

Dreyer's last film, *Gertrud* (1964), is virtually the only important European art film between 1962 and approximately 1975 that could be considered untouched by the *new* modernist influence. The film tells its story in a linear form, with no self-conscious narrative solutions, with no mixing of time dimensions, with no radical use of any stylistic features, and in a characteristically premodernist social environment.

Still, it can be argued that this film fits in very well with the modernist paradigm of its time. *Gertrud*'s modernism is unmistakable, and no doubt, very "classical." Dreyer did not move far from his minimalist silent cinema style. Static extreme long takes (occasionally five minutes long, with an average of 74.8 sec/shot) could be regarded as a conscious silent film stylization, consequently as an element of modernist self-reflexivity. Dreyer was the only director in film history who started his career during early modernism, and maintained that modernist minimalist style until the 1960s when minimalism became fashionable again (this could not be said about Buñuel, and especially not about Fritz Lang, the two other great survivors of modern silent cinema). *Gertrud* is one of the most classical works of Dreyer, and yet it can be associated with modernism by its extremely minimalist, static, and frontal compositions, as well as by the peculiar acting style of the main character. Gertrud speaks always very slowly in a monotone, with no affect in her voice, and seldom looks at the person she is talking to. Although the

film is more reminiscent of the puritan Scandinavian theatrical tradition (the main stylistic background of Swedish cinema) rather than of modern cinema of its time, the way Dreyer used offscreen space and the way he made camera movement independent from the characters' movement made this film seem somewhat adapted to the trend of late modern art cinema focusing on the representation of human alienation.

The Key Film of 1962: Fellini's *8 1/2*

Among a number of important films of this period, one film deserves special attention for the remarkable influence it had on the development of modern cinema. If *Last Year at Marienbad* marked the closure of the romantic period, *8 1/2* represented the new consolidated status of modern cinema.[4] It was the first critical, self-reflective work since Bergman introduced this topic in his early *Prison* in 1948. But the fourteen years that passed between the two films and also the different cultural backgrounds of the two directors are clear when one compares the two films .

Fellini's *8 1/2* was the first film to focus entirely on the modern conception of *auteurship* in the cinema. It emerged in a cultural context where film art, filmmaking, and debates over modern culture were a focus of interest, so it could be regarded not only as another film about filmmaking, but as an important contribution to the debate over cinema's cultural significance.

In 1948 Bergman's film was not a self-portrait in that no single character in the film could be identified with the auteur. Bergman's auteurial dilemma was personified through several characters, each representing a particular aspect of the problem. Furthermore, the story of *Prison* was not in any way autobiographical. The only thing that Bergman claims reflects his own thoughts is the teacher's idea about "hell on Earth." By contrast, Fellini's film is a declared self-portrait emphasized also by superficial traits of the main hero (Mastroianni wears Fellini's hat, his glasses, and scarf). Certainly *8 1/2* is a deeply autobiographical film, as it started out of Fellini's own auteurial crisis, and many elements and characters in it were taken from Fellini's life, including the situation in which a filmmaker forgets what kind of film he

4. The film was finished and released in early 1963, but it was conceived and shot during 1962. The first day of production was 9 May 1962. From the point of view of its impact *8 1/2* is certainly a film of 1963. But regarding the question of the appearance of new ideas and new forms, that is, from the point of view of the evolution of modernism, it has to be considered as a film of 1962.

Fig. 57. Mastroianni as Fellini: *8 ½* (Federico Fellini, 1963).

Fig. 58. The screen test scene: *8 ½* (Federico Fellini, 1963).

wanted to make, as well as the elements and allusions to Jungian psychoanalysis that influenced Fellini to a great extent at this time. Bergman's film includes an embedded not self-reflected story that fills out more than half of the film's running time. In *8 1/2* there is not a single story element that is not subject to the film's fundamental self-reflexivity. Not the least important among those are the comments Guido makes at the ending of *La dolce vita*, and the fact the screen tests Guido is watching with the producer and with his friends repeat the real screen tests of *8 1/2*.[5] The attitude toward filmmaking is much more frivolous, and also the industrial and economic background of film industry is much more exposed in Fellini's film than in *Prison*.

While both films are "auteur-centered," which was an obvious idea in Fellini's time, but not at all in 1948, Fellini depicts the "auteur" as a person absorbing very different influences, coordinating a creative team, and taking advice from different individuals. Bergman's "auteur" is more individualistic, more philosophical or "auteurial" in the Astrucian sense. Both films

5. Fellini started shooting the film with the screen test sequence. The actress in the first test wore the same dress as Sandra Milo who had her real screen test two days before to win the same role. This is in fact a double self-reflection inasmuch as Fellini makes an autobiographical film about a director making an autobiographical film.

ask the same question: is cinema a good enough means for me to formulate my deepest artistic concerns? Am I able to express myself through film? Fellini formulated his questions in a more self-conscious and elaborate way than Bergman did more than a decade before him. But the essence of modern critical self-reflection did not change during this time, which highlights even more the modernity of *Prison*.

Even more important is the difference between the two directors' relationship to cinema. Bergman has doubts about the capability of cinema to express deep philosophical concerns about human existence, and so he explicitly formulates his doubts in the film while staging two stories that are meant to illustrate these concerns. His message to the viewer is something like, "I have a very negative view about the world and I am not sure that this film will be able to illustrate my views." He tells his story, and at the same time he exposes his concerns and doubts about his story. After all, Bergman leaves to the viewer to decide whether his film corresponds to what the mathematics teacher tells about "hell on Earth."

Fellini's message is more radical. Not only does he have doubts about his own powers to express a particular idea about the world, he simply feels unable to express any coherent idea about the world at all. In fact, as one English-speaking reporter says at the press conference at the end of the film, "He has nothing to say!" Yet he wants to make a film, but he cannot start it because he is blocked by people trying to force him to formulate clearly and in a straightforward manner what he wants to do. *8 1/2* depicts a filmmaker who is blocked by the idea that to make a film one has to have clear and distinct ideas.

Considering the question whether cinema is serious enough to express serious philosophical ideas, this is quite a radical shift in locating cinema among the arts. In a way, this is another step towards achieving cinema's independence from other arts and other forms of intellectual activity. According to this approach cinema's seriousness is not rooted in its similarities with other "serious" arts such as theater or literature. Cinema's seriousness is not even assured by its ability to become "philosophical" and being as profound as essay writing. Cinema can be taken seriously simply because a film is "like" its auteur. But is this grounds enough for making films?

Fellini had this dilemma already many years before he made *8 1/2*, even before *Nights of Cabiria*. In a conversation with the students of Centro Sperimentale in 1958 he mentioned that he had been criticized on multiple occasions, especially by left-wing critics and some colleagues, for leaving his characters without positive perspectives at the end of his films.

> [Zavattini's and De Sica's] characters provide more satisfaction at the end of their films or their stories than mine. So, I said to myself, perhaps these gentlemen are right. I cannot tell my heroes at the end of the film, "Have you understood, you'll have to buy this or that newspaper, you have to get married, or you have to go to church . . ." I just can't say these kinds of things. This is a quite inhuman way of dealing with your heroes, isn't it . . . . So, what shall I tell them? I was thinking about that for a long time, and then I realized that the reason why I couldn't propose anything for them to do is because I couldn't say anything to myself in the first place. So, the only thing I can offer to my heroes who are so miserable and desperate is my solidarity. Thus, for example I could tell them, "*Listen, I can't explain to you what is going wrong, but in any case, I love you, and I will give you a serenade.*" And for *Nights of Cabiria* I thought I would make a film about a pathetic girl, who, no matter what, keeps believing in normal human relationships, even though in a confused and naive way. And at the end of the film I wanted to tell her, "*Listen, I have made you go through all sorts of terrible things, but I find you so sympathetic that I want to give you a little serenade.*" [6]

According to this testimony, Fellini's long journey of realizing what the freedom of the auteur means in filmmaking—and which led to the clear formulation of this self-liberation from expectations and requirements of others—started already in the mid-1950s when he reached the initial peak of his career. We also know that his intermittent engagement with Jungian psychoanalysis allowed him to overcome his inner doubts.[7] The traces of this influence appear already in *La dolce vita* in the character of Steiner. Finally he reached a point where he had a "clear and distinct" idea about his own confusion and incapacity to formulate philosophically or politically correct ideas. In *8 1/2* he exposes the idea that a film can be based on "nothing at all." Not having a clear intelligible idea to communicate is not an obstacle to filmmaking as long as the film entirely expresses the auteur's inner universe, however confused and unclear that might be.

To put it in critical terms, *8 1/2* marks a transition from the Astrucian conception of the auteur (making a film as writing a philosophical essay) to the *Cahiers*-style notion of the auteur (making film out of pure personal experience and inner feelings). It is no surprise that French new wave auteur Pierre Kast celebrated this film in *Cahiers* as the first real great Fellini film

6. Fellini, "Mon métier," 18.

7. He was introduced to Jung's thoughts by a Jungian psychoanlist, Ernest Berhard. For details, see Tullio Kezich, *Fellini* (Milan: Camunia, 1987).

since *I vitelloni*.[8] He praises *8 1/2* first of all for its sincerity, for its personal expressions and lyricism. But the real novelty of it according to Kast was "the depiction of an anxiety, of a doubt in the self realized in a sound moral and physical manner, and with a sort of lyricism that is generally missing completely from this kind of proposition."[9]

In fact, Fellini was the first auteur in modern cinema to draw all the conclusions from this notion of the auteur who thus finds himself alone amidst the deluge of overwhelming influences, ideas and expectations of others. The price the auteur has to pay for his self-liberation is that he finds nothing in the exterior world to start up from. The only thing he can begin with is what he finds within, which, however appears as nothing at all for others. And yet, this Nothingness is the only creative source for the modern auteur. Fellini is the first to represent the paradox of the self-liberated modern auteur who, as a consequence of his liberation, is left completely lonely with his own visions, nightmares, and creatures. The real self-liberating gesture of *8 1/2* was precisely its serenity in accepting this loneliness. It was not the romantic proposition of the lonely artist in a nonunderstanding world but was rather the feeling of liberation created by this situation that was the novelty in Fellini's film. And this was understood immediately at the time. As Pierre Kast put it: "He overcomes his own anxieties and those of every filmmaker . . . who are traumatized by a state of inferiority and of subjection in which hides the art of filmmaking."[10] Thus *8 1/2* liberated filmmakers not only from conventions of classical film art but also from the constrained intellectualism of modern film art that was on the horizon.

The other reason why *8 1/2* was an important milestone in the development of modern cinema is that it was the first film to include virtually all the important innovations of newborn modernism. First of all, here Fellini sheds entirely the neorealist tradition and makes a film in which "reality" can be interpreted only as an object of auteurial fantasy. Three years had passed since the release of *Hiroshima, My Love* and it became common practice, almost compulsory, for a modern filmmaker of the time to merge past and present and make reality and fantasy indiscernible. *Hiroshima*'s novelty of course was not the flashback technique, but that the memories evoked in the film were not associated with a well-defined story line with a begin-

8. "I liked neither *La strada* nor *Cabiria*. Fellini forcefully rejoins and reexamines everything he had said until recently with the craziness and momentum of *I vitelloni* and *The White Sheik*." Pierre Kast, "Les petits potamogétous," *Cahiers du cinéma* 145 (July 1963): 52.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

ning and an end (as opposed to *Wild Strawberries*). The present appears in *Hiroshima* much more like an emotional situation than a story. Hence, past events do not appear as embedded stories in a present time narrative. The film is constructed around the interaction between different layers of experienced and inexperienced (documentary footage) past and present events, where the present involves only a situation that starts this mental flow of emotional associations. Then in 1961 *Last Year at Marienbad* became the first film to cancel entirely the coherent fabula structure. The merging of story elements of very different mental levels (real, vision, memory, etc.) was already accepted as an established technique, but this technique appeared in this film in a totally abstract and artificial universe where even the characters did not have names and that was hard to relate to any experience about reality.

Auteurial reflexivity in *Marienbad* essentially related to an abstract narrative position. The narrator, character "X," represents an impersonal narrative point of view, the source of the arrangement of the narration or *écriture*, rather than a personal universe meant to be real.[11] As I mentioned above, *Marienbad* followed faithfully Robbe-Grillet's conception that the only real time in the film is the time *of* the film, and the only reality in the film is the reality *of* the film—hence the ambiguity reigning over the "construction of the fabula." If there is no coherent story behind the plot, there exist no criteria of the veracity of the plot either. Contradicting fabula solutions are therefore natural consequences of this kind of narrative.

This is where *8 1/2* was entirely innovative. It was not simply another popularized version of the mental journey form but a manifestation of another version of auteurial self-expression. Fellini connected the modern mental journey genre with the self-representation of the auteur. Unlike in *Marienbad*, in *8 1/2* the auteur of the narration is an abstract position in the narration but also a real person: Fellini himself. He anchored his film unambiguously to the proposition that everything that happens in this film happens in the auteur's mind. In other words, even if *8 1/2* is not any less "confusing" than *Marienbad* regarding the degree of reality or fantasy of the individual scenes, it is clear that whatever we see in the film is a manifestation of a universe *existing independently of the narration*. This makes a relationship between fantasy and reality irrelevant since "reality" is understood as something that unquestionably exists independently of the film. Thoughts, visions, fantasy, and nightmares all are understood as the real mental content once they are represented as belonging to an existing person. Nobody speculated too

11. In French juridical usage, "X" stands for an unknown suspect.

much about the realism in the final scene, for example, where all the characters of the film appear suddenly together after the press conference and everybody has left. *8 1/2* did not seem to be a puzzle to resolve, like *Last Year at Marienbad* (about which the most frustrating thing is that after all there is no puzzle to resolve). Fellini, by contrast, makes it clear right at the outset that what we see is nothing to be resolved in terms of chronological order and causal links; it is rather his own artistic vision about himself making a film. Thus Fellini not only made the mental journey form approachable for ordinary audiences, but in many respects his film foreshadowed the radical turn of modernism in the second half of the 1960s. It was the first film to reflect on filmmaking as an overt and self-conscious auteurial discourse.

All three essential principles of the modern film form were represented in *8 1/2* in a very special mixture: *subjectivity* in the form of a highly personal, even overtly autobiographic story; *critical reflexivity* in the sense that the film meditates over the use and the powers of filmmaking, and Fellini's own ambiguous relationship to it, containing also direct references to its own making; *abstraction* in the sense that the story is entirely "mentally based," where the scenes are connected by a very loose chronology, by a very weak causal order, if any, and where the degree of reality versus fantasy is not always distinguished. Thus, *8 1/2* became the first explicit demonstration of what modern cinema was. Beyond its artistic qualities, its self-reflexive and all-embracing character made *8 1/2* the archetype of the modern filmmaker's subjective vision about his work and inspired at least five important modernist films about filmmaking: Sjöman's *I Am Curious (Yellow)* (1967), Wajda's *Everything for Sale* (1967), Paul Mazursky's *Alex in Wonderland* (1968), which is a declared tribute to Fellini (who appears in the film), Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1974), and Wenders's *The State of the Things* (1982).

Central Europe

Four major modern filmmakers made their first modernist films in Eastern Europe in 1962 as well: Roman Polanski in Poland (*Knife in the Water*), Andrei Tarkovsky in the Soviet Union (*Childhood of Ivan*), Miklós Jancsó in Hungary (*Cantata*), and Milos Forman in Czechoslovakia (*Black Peter*). These films bear the marks of different cultural traditions, whether cinematic or literary, that associate them with their cultural environment, but at the same time an attachment to different models of modernist cinema is discernable as well. For Tarkovsky, the modernist model is undoubtedly *Hiroshima, My Love*, and the mental journey genre that he introduces into the Soviet heroic war-film tradition. For Jancsó the model is Antonioni, especially *La*

notte, which he admits having consulted very thoroughly before he started shooting his own film.[12] He uses the Antonioni style to tell a story about the conflict between traditions of rural life and alienated urban intellectualism, a topic rooted in Hungarian literature. For Polanski the model was the 1950s closed-situation drama modernized by his fellow countryman, Jerzy Kawalerowicz. Forman's model is neorealism in a somewhat modernized form as inspired by Olmi's *The Job*. Forman injects this style with a harsh grotesque tone, which on the one hand is rooted in Czechoslovak literary traditions, and on the other hand creates an original, independent trend in modern cinema, inspiring Hungarian cinema as well in the early 1970s.

All in all we can say that the new phenomena in East European cinema were modernization movements in the sense that most of the new films applied to varying degrees the solutions introduced by French and Italian modern films into art filmmaking. In Hungary, among the first acclaimed young modernist directors were István Gaál with his *Current* (1963), which had a plot similar to Bertolucci's *Before the Revolution*, István Szabó with *The Age of Daydreaming* (1964), displaying a considerable amount of influence of Truffaut; and Sándor Kardos and János Rózsa with their *Children's Sicknesses* (1965), virtually a stylistic replica of Malle's *Zazie in the Subway*. I already mentioned Jancsó's film that launched Hungarian modern cinema, *Cantata*, which was strong influenced by Antonioni's *La notte*.

These films were not very original in their stylistic conceptions, yet they were important achievements in canonizing modernist norms in European and especially in Hungarian cinema. These "secondary" films are the ones that comprise a movement or a trend; thus modernism was not just a handful of high-class cult films but a real movement including real trends consisting both of primary films and their secondary variations. Needless to say, stylistic "secondariness" does not compromise in any way the aesthetic value of these films. *Cantata* may not be as important as *La notte*, yet it is a well-made early modernist film. And *Current* may evoke *Before the Revolution*, yet Gaál's film is a much more consistent and powerful work than Bertolucci's. And as Truffautian as Szabó's first film may appear, it is a sincere and personal expression of the spirit of a generation.

Modernism's power lay in its capability to "infiltrate" various national traditions and provide a common language with which to communicate with other cultures. It was the common experience of changing modernity that made the common language possible. Nevertheless, each country, each region formulated its own version of this experience, and this is what

12. Janscó to the author, personal communication.

gave diversity to the modernist movement. This is why almost all of these films became international successes and acknowledged as widening the modernist movement. But most important, they turned out to be representing just the preparation for the emergence of real original achievements of Eastern European modernism.

Czechoslovak Grotesque Realism

While in Hungary post-neorealist and French new wave influences were both palpable, for Czechoslovak new cinema the only comparison that could be found with other new phenomena of the early 1960s was neorealism of the kind best exemplified by Jacques Rozier's *Adieu Philippine* (1961), but especially by Olmi's *The Job* (1961).[13] Rozier's film could not have had a direct impact on new Czechoslovak films as it was released only in 1963, the same year as *Black Peter.* On the other hand, as Peter Hames notes, Forman admitted his admiration for Olmi, and the dance hall sequences in both *Black Peter* and *The Loves of a Blonde* testify to a direct influence of both Olmi films of the period.

The reemergence of direct cinema, whose roots go back to the late 1920s, was without a doubt a remarkable phenomenon at the rise of modernism. The end of neorealism obviously put a temporary end to direct filming. The spreading of lightweight handheld equipment and the renewed fashion of plein-air improvised filmmaking brought back the direct style in many ways, especially in Italy, but in France and Czechoslovakia too. These films obviously represented a new style compared to the conventions of the 1950s even in Italy, where the neorealist tradition had not faded away completely. However, as we saw in relation to Rouch, the new fashion of direct filming had in many cases nothing to do with neorealism. Moreover, the direct-film technique did not mean automatically joining the modernist movement. If some of these new direct-style films can be listed under the category of modernism, is not because of their direct style but because in some way they adapted their style to modernist principles. For example, in Olmi's

13. In his brilliant work (*The Czekoslovak New Wave* [Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985], 120), Peter Hames mentions also a slight "influence of cinéma vérité" with regard mainly to short- and medium-length films. However, what he means by cinéma vérité is "filming real people in uncontrolled situations." As we saw, the point in *real* cinéma vérité as invented by Jean Rouch was not the uncontrolled situation, rather the character's uncontrolled reflections on the situation. That is entirely missing in Czechoslovak new wave films, which is why I prefer to use the comparison with neorealism, whose distinctive feature is the loosely controlled acting style of professional or amateur actors, including improvised dialogues on a given topic.

Fig. 59. Czechoslovak grotesque: Frantisek Kosina and Ladislav Jakim in *Black Peter* (Milos Forman, 1963).

case one can definitely see an unfolding of an abstract style in *The Fiances* compared to the rather conventional neorealist *The Job.* While in the former he joins the social realist style of De Sica and Zavattini, in the latter he definitely seems to have become a follower of Antonioni: his wide empty spaces, his long contemplative shots, and especially the theme of losing contact and communication illustrates Olmi's modernizing post-neorealist direct style.

Likewise, one could oppose Rozier and Rouch within the French new wave. Rozier's first film, *Adieu Philippine* (1961, but released only in 1963) was a typical "nonmodern new-wave" film with a rather impersonal candid view on the problems of young people in contemporary France and with some references to the Algerian war. It was shot in a rather nondramatic, improvised direct-film style concentrating on the everydayness of its scenes. However, *Adieu Philippine* had nothing to do with neorealism's seriousness and social engagement; its form was rather playful, especially the editing style of some of its scenes, depicting mostly the pleasures of life. This definitely made this film a genuine product of the new wave spirit. But in no way did *Adieu Philippine* become a referential film of the new wave, as it did not establish an original modern form and only inserted some elements of new wave style in direct filming. Rozier did not become a modernist new wave director.[14] In contrast, Rouch with his cinéma vérité introduced a genuinely modernist version of documentary and direct filming.

This is where the Czechoslovak new wave introduced some innovations. As the Bazinian tradition of French film criticism was always very sensitive to stylistic connections, young film critic André Téchiné recognized

14. He made his next film in 1970 and has made only three more films altogether during the following thirty-five years.

immediately the originality of Forman's style within modern realism: "Neither Olmi and even less Antonioni are real points of reference to locate Forman among the contemporary filmmakers. . . . Forman's cinema talks about the ability to smile."[15] In Czechoslovakia the new direct cinema movement was another genuine phenomenon only distantly referring to the neorealist tradition and at the same time modernizing direct film style. Right at the outset, in 1962 the first appearance of the young generation in Vera Chytilová's *A Bagful of Fleas* (1962) showed a peculiar grotesque vision infused with the direct film style that was nonexistent anywhere else in European cinema. This strange mixture of direct film grotesque comes out of the Czechoslovak literary culture of the absurd and grotesque from Franz Kafka and Jaroslav Hašek all the way to Bohumil Hrabal. The Czechoslovak filmmakers were conscious of their peculiar tradition and its function in their culture. As Forman explains:

> The tradition of Czech culture is always humor based on serious things, like *The Good Soldier Svejk*. Kafka is a humorous author, but a bitter humorist. It is in the Czech people. You know, to laugh at its own tragedy has been in this century the only way for such a little nation placed in such a dangerous spot in Europe to survive. So humor was always the source of a certain self-defense. If you don't know how to laugh, the only solution is to commit suicide.[16]

The grotesque direct cinema style struck a harsh satirical tone in the first films of Milos Forman (*Black Peter*, 1963; *The Loves of a Blonde*, 1965) and Ivan Passer (*Intimate Lighting*, 1966). And the grotesque and satirical approach also became enriched by absurdist and surrealist elements in Chytilová's *Daisies* (1966), and in Forman's *The Firemen's Ball* (1967). Although a grotesque and satirical vision appeared already in Malle's *Zazie in the Subway*, it did not mix with direct film style. Grotesque satire and absurd surrealism, together with the emphasis on everyday banality, provided an original mixture that between 1964 and 1968 placed Czechoslovak cinema among Europe's most unique and original modern phenomena.

The "Central European Experience"

As Forman noted, Czechoslovak grotesque stems from a certain Central European historical experience. This experience, formulated also in the literature of Central Europe, is a common cultural background for Czechoslovak, German, and Hungarian cinema.

15. André Téchiné, "Le sourire de Prague" *Cahiers du cinéma* 174 (January 1965): 61.
16. Cited by Hames, *Czekoslovak New Wave*, 120.

Fig. 60. The last freezed image: Jan Vostrcil in *Black Peter* (Milos Forman, 1963).

As opposed to West European modernism's universalistic vision, fueled by the existentialist anxiety over the emptiness of freedom and by the loneliness of the abstract individual facing nothingness, the power of the approach proposed by the Czechoslovak films was precisely the representation of the ultimate impossibility of overcoming provincialism. Not only do the heroes of these films not have a mental perspective that goes beyond their small community, as their automatic reflexes are directed by empty conventions, but they constantly try to generalize their way of being in an attempt to make a superior order out of their provincial mentality and situation. And this pretension to generalize provincial narrow-mindedness is precisely what makes their persona and behavior grotesque and raises them above the quality of realist representation. The absurdity of this attitude stems from the tension between the generalizing pretension and the inability to be consistent. These characters always try to adapt to the changes in their immediate environment, but as they are unable to see the general laws that rule those changes, and their attempts to adapt result in total chaos. This is well illustrated by the end of *Black Peter,* where the father, who all through the film constantly tries to discipline his son by teaching him lessons and making all kinds of inconsistent speeches, raises his finger and says, "Because the important thing is . . . the important thing is—," at which point Forman cuts the scene short to end the film.

The inconsistency of narrow-minded provincialism is not always funny. It may become fatal, too, as is beautifully shown in Klos and Kadár's classical-style film *The Shop on Main Street* (1965). In this film simple inconsistency, the loss of moral orientation, and the inability to understand the rules of the outside world become fatal. Nobody is all good or all bad in the film (even the Nazi brother-in-law has some redeeming features). The characters

just cannot understand the rules according to which the situation changes around them, and consequently their responses are always inadequate and destructive. Elmar Klos and Jan Kadár, codirectors of the film, put this idea in exact terms:

> As soon as something like that can happen, anything can happen, thanks to the indifference of the bystanders. All that is needed is a little bit of cowardice or fear. Someone once wrote that people are, after all, for the most part, good, reasonable, sensible, they aren't murderers. . . . It is an immense oversimplification to paint brutality simply in the form of the Devil. It can just as well be very jovial, neighborly—and no less evil. The basis of violence consists for the most part in harmless, kind people who are indifferent toward brutality. Sooner or later these people may overcome their indifference, but then it is usually too late.[17]

In his famous novel *The Confusions of Young Törless*, Austrian novelist Robert Musil came to the same conclusion in the early twentieth century. Musil showed that what one can learn in a conservative and hierarchical society is that such things as personal integrity and autonomy cannot exist at all. When Törless sees that there is no limit to how far one can go in humiliating another person and also that there is no limit to how far one can go in allowing oneself to be humiliated, his final conclusion is that "Alles geschehen," everything just happens. If anything can happen, one cannot predict what will happen in the next moment; the sequence of events shows no consistent order or law behind human behavior. Anything can happen and everything just happens.

A parable by Franz Kafka, "Before the Law," puts this experience in concise form. A man from the countryside arrives before the open gate of the law and asks for admittance. But the doorkeeper who watches the gate says that he has to wait. He obediently sits down and waits. From time to time he asks when he will be allowed to enter, but the answer is always the same: he has to wait. The man waits for years, finally he is about to die. Before he passes away he asks the guard: "Everyone strives to reach the Law. So how does it happen that for all these many years no one but myself has ever begged for admittance?" The doorkeeper answers, "No one else could ever be admitted here, since this gate was made only for you. I am now going to shut it."[18]

17. In Antonin J. Liehm, *Closely Watched Films* (White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1974), 407.

18. *Collected Stories*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York, 1993), 175.

Kafka's highly mysterious parable has an important aspect that explains much of the specificity of Central European modern cinema. It is the paradoxical relationship between the law and order and the individual autonomy. The frequent and rapid changes of rules in Central Europe, which were the fundamental experience of peoples of this region during the last couple of hundred years, have developed an ability for quick mental and moral adaptation together with appreciation for a stable order regardless of its form or content. Individual autonomy standing up to the order is painfully missing from this experience. The lack of moral consistency is generally explained, in literature and political theory, by the survival of traditional hierarchical and authoritarian political structures in this region, which were the solutions chosen in frequent situations of political instability. The only meaning personal autonomy has in these conditions is the ability to accept any order that comes from the exterior, and then trying to survive it. Resignation and humor mentioned by Forman is one strategy. Selfishness and indifference to other people's suffering is another. When the order offends moral conviction, the individual's response is a desperate attempt to make a compromise that finally leads to schizophrenia or cynical resignation of moral consistency.

The experience of lack of moral autonomy, witnessed in Central European literature and cinema from Musil and Kafka to the Czechoslovak new cinema, is also the basic material for many important works of the new German cinema. One of its debut films was Volker Schlöndorff's adaptation of Musil's novel, *The Young Törless* (1966), and to show how society oppresses and humiliates personal integrity will be one of the central topics of Werner Herzog and R.W. Fassbinder as well starting from the mid-1970s.

But it is Miklós Jancsó who gave the most genuine form to the Kafkaesque experience of Central European historical existence by introducing it into the radicalized form of Antonioni-style modernism.

Jancsó and the Ornamental Style

As I mentioned above, modern Hungarian cinema starts with Jancsó's little-known Antonioni replica, *Cantata*. There is however no way to recognize the real originality of Jancsó's visionary style in this film apart from his taste for long traveling shots appearing at that time only as a mannerism of the Antonioni style. But in 1964 Jancsó came out with his own, novel, radical continuity style, which has become the most original and most influential innovation since the beginning of modern cinema. The film that first represented this style was *My Way Home* (1964). This is the first film in which

the general existentialist angst toward human emptiness is reinterpreted as the angst caused by the incalculability of historical and social conditions. The film tells the story of a Hungarian POW right at the end of the war. The young man is sent to help a Russian soldier guard the livestock of the Soviet army on a vast and deserted territory encircled by minefields. Though they do not understand each other's language and their relationship is that of a guard and a prisoner, after a while they become friends, and when the Russian soldier becomes seriously sick, instead of fleeing, the Hungarian POW puts on the Russian uniform to go and find help. He meets a group of Hungarian refugees one of whom he suspects to be a doctor. He uses his Soviet rifle to convince him to go and see the ill soldier. By the time they get back, the soldier dies. Now, the Hungarian is free to go. On his way home he is recognized by people who were part of the group he halted on the road, they realize that he is not a Russian soldier, but a Hungarian, and beat him up.

Beyond the obvious similarities with Antonioni some fundamental differences also strike the eye. Jancsó radically reduces the visual elements that circumscribe space. Antonioni's spaces vary from film to film, and as he progressed in his career, physical emptiness in a literal sense characterized them to only a limited degree, and his films after *L'avventura* are set in urban environments. By contrast, from *My Way Home* on, Jancsó locates all his stories, apart from two exceptions (*Confrontation*, 1968; and *La pacifista*, 1972) in an entirely empty prairie-like landscape very typical of the eastern region of Hungary, called the *puszta*. He intensifies the abstract character of the milieu to such a degree that it becomes symbolic. Elements of utter symbolism appears in *My Way Home* also when the two soldiers start chasing a young woman through the meadows, and suddenly an airplane appears from nowhere, approaching at low altitude, passing by, then turning back again even lower, then returns again and again until they have to lay on the ground, after which, having rescued the girl this way, it suddenly disappears.

Another significant consequence of the element of radically deserted space is that camera movements may become much more independent of the characters' movement than in the films of Antonioni, where the camera essentially follows the character's trajectory in predetermined ways. In Jancsó's films the space becomes completely homogeneous. There are no streets, no roads to lead the characters' movements, and there are only a few randomly dispersed built objects or trees to provide some sense of orientation in this endless and homogeneous space. The space is given structure almost exclusively by the movements of the camera and the characters. As there are

no predetermined routes and directions from where something or someone is more likely to appear than from another direction, appearance or disappearance of humans and things in this space seems always somewhat random and unexpected. Since this homogeneous space continues endlessly in all directions, the portion of the space the viewer momentarily does not see is perceived as undisclosed rather than as being a different space unit.

Since the viewer is never provided with the whole view of the space, offscreen space functions as a possible source for unexpected dramatic events. This creates a constant feeling of suspense and frustration as the viewer's sight is limited by the arbitrariness of the camera movement and the camera angle rather than by the natural structure of the space. It is not the characters who are moving randomly, it is the spectator who is prevented from perceiving important happenings offscreen. The effect it produces is very similar to that of Bressonian minimalism, also excluding a large portion of the space with an overt arbitrariness, only Bresson achieves this effect through radical fragmentation of the space by close-ups, while Jancsó works with extending homogeneous space by continuous movements.

The other consequence of Jancsó's continuity style is an increasingly ornamental use of character and camera movements. Since no spatial structure determines these movements, they will be organized by ornamental repetition of movement patterns.[19] While the random movement of the characters in Antonioni's films is structured by the labyrinth of the big city, the movements in Jancsó's homogeneous space are given sense by the paradigm of a certain ritual.

This leads us to the most important difference between Jancsó and Antonioni, mentioned already above. Jancsó reintegrates his characters into the environment so that the conflict between them disappears completely. However, rather than a return to organic realism, this solution is a most radical representation of alienation. It does not result in a rehumanization of the landscape but, on the contrary, in a total reduction of the human element to objecthood, an element of the landscape. This is represented by the fact that the ritual directing the characters' movements is the ritual of manipulation. Manipulation appears in the Jancsó films essentially as a character's physical impact on another character's motion. As there is very little dialogue in his films, Jancsó transforms all kinds of human relationships into manipula-

19. This is what Nöel Burch describes with respect to Antonioni as a "camera ballet." Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, 76. Since this book was first published in 1969, it is not too surprising that Burch did not mention Jancsó at all in the text and did not take into consideration Jancsó's radical use of the "camera-ballet."

tion of motion patterns. The basic elements of the ritual of manipulation are to set something in motion, to immobilize, to change sides and force others to change sides, to change and to force others to change clothing, to kill and to give birth, to change and to enforce others to change direction or speed of motion. In fact very little autonomy in the characters' movements can be found. Everything they do is visibly or invisibly enforced and manipulated by other characters' movements, whose manipulation is usually disclosed subsequently.

For example, in the *The Red and the White* (1967), two characters fighting the Whites enter an apparently empty compound, looking for their comrades. They separate and one of them goes upstairs to check the building. We follow him as he explores the place, and at a certain point we hear steps coming up the stairs, and we realize that the soldier's motion has become somewhat constrained but we don't see why. He simply stops, puts down his rifle, and starts to take off his clothing. A couple of seconds later two enemy White soldiers enter the scene from behind the camera, and that is when we understand what has happened. About a half an hour later the situation changes: a White officer turns toward the camera and collapses. He gets shot from the direction of the camera before the spectator realized that the place has been invaded the same way by the Reds. In Jancsó's unstructured space nobody is safe, and nobody has a secure and stable place. Everything depends on momentary relations that are as fluid as the physical movements of the characters and the camera.

In his next film, *The Round-Up* (1965), all the abstract qualities of the Jancsó style were developed to a large extent, yet realism still prevailed over symbolism. It was his first film in which his abstract style could be associated with abstract concepts such as "power," "manipulation," "humiliation," and "historical violence." This film was a milestone in the history of Hungarian modern cinema, as it started a long and lasting series of all kinds of political and historical parables, but most important it created the most general and comprehensive visual and narrative model of the Kafkaesque atmosphere of Central European history, which would be Jancsó's central subject matter for the following thirty years. Jancsó's style and his conception of history and power have been subject to many thorough analyses in the 1970s and 1980s. The only thing I want to highlight here is the extent to which the success of Jancsó's model was due to the idea of a superficial order masking fundamental chaos, which became more apparent as this style became increasingly symbolic and ornamental. This aspect of Jancsó's modernism is extremely important in the present discussion, since ornamentalism

Fig. 61. Impulse comes from offscreen space: *The Red and the White* (Miklós Jancsó, 1967).

is one the most peculiar phenomena within modernism as it apparently contradicts its general rigorousness and austerity.

Modern ornamentalism means not the reckless use of decorative elements per se to enhance sensational qualities of the film, but a reuse or reconstruction of aesthetic patterns of a primitive cultural entity supposed to express the mental and psychic elements of that culture, and of course by the same token, those of modern contemporary culture, too. When Jancsó places his stories in the Hungarian *puszta*, it is not only because he wants his setting to be even more empty and abstract than the setting of Antonioni, but essentially because he thinks that this is the original place of the mentality and psychology of that particular human ritual that he is representing in his films. The basic elements he uses to build up his constructions of choreographed movements are those of the ancient experience of those living defenseless this wide open space, where soldiers of various powers may show up and disappear at any moment, where no stable structure can crystallize apart from what is immediately given, and where ultimate loneliness is the source of ultimate cruelty. Jancsó was often compared to Hungarian novelist of the early twentieth century, Zsigmond Móricz, for his representation of the rite of speechless violence of the people of the *puszta*. Móricz's highly elliptical narrative technique can be justly compared to Jancsó's highly restrictive narration: both use very little dialogue in their narratives, and both represent physical and psychological violence as a natural part of the everyday life of these people. It is precisely in the intensified ornamental use of everyday violence that Jancsó modernizes the Móricz-like narrative by removing this experience from the concrete national cultural environment and makes it an abstract representation of the relationship between the individual and faceless political power.

However, it was not until the symbolism of his ornamental style unfolded that the foreign press discovered Jancsó as one of the most innovative auteurs of modern cinema. *The Round-Up* was received with relative indifference, one of the reviews saying that "this film is not a big shock for modern cinema." But just like in Antonioni's case, the second film was a hit. *The Red and the White* was declared a great masterpiece.

As realist as *The Round-Up* appears, it hides in its form the ultimate source of the ornamental symbolism of his movement choreography that will unfold later. As mentioned, *The Round-Up* is a special variation of the modern investigation genre in which the goal of the investigation is concealed. Apparently there is a strict logic in the investigation that suggests that there are clear, unequivocal goals pursued by a central power and executed at the various levels of the military and law enforcement hierarchy.

The voice-over narration at the beginning of the film tells very clearly that this story is about a late nineteenth-century law enforcement campaign to get rid of remnants of the army of the 1848 uprising. So the spectator has a general view about the sense of the narrative frame. But the film does not depict the rounding up of the freedom fighters/criminals but follows an investigation process engaged among the alleged criminals already in custody. By the end of the film, the logical consistency of the whole procedure is definitely broken: the investigators were first looking for some killers, then they were looking for Sándor, the leader of bandits who they pretended not to know in person. In order to identify him among the detainees, they utilized Sándor's men, turning them against each other, while it turned out that they in reality knew that Sándor was not in the prison. Then detention became compulsory military service, then the detainees were lured into a trap to disclose their identity as former freedom fighters after which they were arrested again while Sándor was pardoned. Placed in sequence, these elements do not suggest that there was a consistent plan behind the events, which would make one step a logical consequence of the previous one and a next one as a logical result of it. Each step in the process stands alone separated by a logical gap from the previous and following ones. The only thing that links these steps together is that they are individually organized by similar rules. The goal that is achieved by these rules is to make the detained say and do things against their will. That is the ritual of the power. This ritual is not instrumental in reaching any specific goals. We cannot say that the investigation process was aimed at finding Sándor, because they knew that he was not in the prison. Nor can we say that it was aimed at ferreting out Sándor's men, because they already knew who they were. Not to mention that they could have done the same trick at the beginning of the story if they wanted to. What the investigators did was practice the ritual of power in different variations, an ornamental repetition of the same basic patterns. In this one can realize that radically continuous composition of Jancsó's films covers a vision of a radically fragmented reality.

There is, however, one more important element in this. The reason why the spectator has the illusion that the events unfold according to an underlying consistent plan is that the agents of power who execute the ritual change constantly. The agents never give two contradictory orders and never make two contradictory steps. There is always a new order and a new agent coming to shift the direction of the process. Orders are constantly overruled by someone representing a higher level of hierarchy. This creates an illusion of a regulated hierarchical system of power effectuating a consistent logic of acts with an ultimate instance controlling all the

processes, even if its logic is never disclosed to the full extent. But just because this ultimate instance never manifests itself in the film, it remains a mere presumption of the viewer who is desperately seeking for ultimate logical consistency. In reality, there is no end to the sequence of overruling orders coming from increasingly higher levels of the hierarchy, and each level represents the same highest instance: the hierarchy itself. Every level of the hierarchy is related to the next one by the same rule: control of the lower one's autonomy on the one hand and obedience to the higher one on the other. Thus prisoners and agents of the power are not representing two different realms; they are rather part of the same hierarchy and function according to the same rules. All of this has an important consequence. There is no ultimate instance of power whose autonomy controls the whole process. If hierarchy is the central principle of power, then power as a central governing instance is ultimately void, and the highest level of the hierarchy is empty. We found the same conclusion in Kafka's tale. If the law is not given substance by individual autonomy, only by individual obedience, law becomes unapproachable, and it becomes a void entity. The mythical "highest instance" of power appears as the simple ritual of self-maintaining hierarchy.

Summary

Three general trends dominate the middle period between 1962 and 1966: different variations of minimalism, different variations of naturalist styles, and new wave–style ironic self-reflective narration.

Films of minimalist style were created mainly in two genres: mental journey and closed-situation drama. The most important closed-situation dramas of the period were Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel* (1962), where minimalist narrative was infused by surrealist elements, Saura's *The Hunt* (1965), in which closed situation was coupled with Antonioni-style minimalism.

Bergman's four films of the period, the "trilogy" and *Persona* largely contributed to the closed-situation minimalist form of the middle period representing the expressive version of this form. An original version of expressive minimalism appears in Nemec's *Diamonds of the Night* (1964) including some surrealist elements in a mental journey narrative.

Minimalist-style mental journey films include Tarkovsky's *The Childhood of Ivan* (1962), and Robbe-Grillet's mental journey films using an increasingly serial structure, from *The Immortal* (1963) to *Trans-Europ-Express* (1966). A peculiar case of the mental journey form is Woijczech Has's *The Saragossa Manuscript* (1964). Both in terms of mise-en-scène and visual composition the

film does not reveal any influence of modernism, whereas it is quite unique in its narrative composition, containing a series of narratives embedded in one another. The only antecedent to this structure can be found in *The Immortal* and suggests serial construction initiated by Resnais's *Muriel* (1963).

The essay genre initiated in Godard's *The Little Soldier* became probably the most popular form primarily with some kind of cinéma vérité or neorealist naturalism. Godard's own films, like *My Life to Live* (1962) and *A Married Woman* (1964) were the main models, followed by Sjöman's *491* (1964), Bertolucci's *Before the Revolution*, (1964), and especially Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* (1966), this last film being directly inspired by *My Life to Live*. Basilio Patino's *Nine Letters to Bertha* (1966) is also an example of the quick spread of the essay form. Straub's influential *Not Reconciled* (1965) bears both the influence of the Godard essay and Bresson's metonymic minimalism, a mixture that itself became a model for the early Fassbinder.

Inspired by Olmi, Forman's *Black Peter* (1963) initiated the satirical naturalist style of the Czech new wave, while Olmi himself modernized his own post-neorealist style in *The Fiancés* (1963) using Antonioni's minimalist vision together with some elements of the mental journey form.

Films of ornamental or theatrical styles appear only at the end of this period. In 1964, Fellini's *Juliet of the Spirits* and Antonioni's *The Red Desert*, in 1965 Jancsó's *The Round-Up*, Paradzhanov's *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, and Godard's *Pierrot le fou* represent a significant shift in the orientation of modern cinema. With Peter Brook's *Marat/Sade* (1966) theatrical style appears explicitly in modern cinema after *Last Year at Marienbad*'s less obvious but spectacular theatricality.

The following chapters will attempt to explain why this shift in the dominant styles occurred.

:18:
The Year 1966

If the year 1959 is highlighted by the concentrated emergence of influential modernist films, the year 1966 was another important year in the history of modern cinema for a similar reason: it represents simultaneously a summit and a turning point. It was a summit because many of the most important films of modernism appeared in the period 1965–1966, and a turning point because many new trends or new periods started after this year. All the important filmmaking countries made their modernist turn by 1965, or at least attempts were made in this direction, like in the case of West Germany. The second wave of modernist directors making their debuts before 1963 were already through their second films, while the first wave of modern directors were already regarded as "classical" masters. All the important genres, styles, and solutions of modern cinema were already on the scene. Modern cinema was about to become classical, and it was time for a new start, and for reflection.

For Germany, 1966 was definitely the highlight of the 1960s as it became the opening year of the new German cinema. Four years after the Oberhausen Manifesto and after many years of depression new directors suddenly drew international attention to German cinema. The success of Alexander Kluge's *Yesterday Girl* at the Venice Film Festival and Ulrich Schamoni's *It*, Volker Schlöndorff's *The Young Törless*, and Jean-Marie Straub's *Not Reconciled* at the Cannes Film Festival were the evidence of a real renewal of German cinema. Werner Herzog started his first film in this year, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg had already made a long feature, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder also started his short films by that time. Other major European modern auteurs made their first films or first films of international acclaim in this year, like Dusan Makavejev (*Man Is Not a Bird*), Jiří Menzel (*Closely Watched Trains*),

Sergei Paradzhanov (*Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*), Marguerite Duras (*La musica*), István Szabó (*Father*), András Kovács (*Cold Days*), and Ferenc Kósa (*Ten Thousand Days*).

For many first wave modern directors this year was a turning point in their career, or a new start. The most spectacular turn was made by Antonioni, who seemed to have closed his great modernist series with *The Red Desert* (1964) and returned to a more conventional and popular narrative style in *Blow-Up*. The politically conscious avant-garde period of Jean-Luc Godard starts in 1967 with *La Chinoise* and *Week-end*, and becomes even more radicalized after 1968. The middle of the 1960s marks a transition for other directors too: there is a long pause marking a stylistic change in the works of Fellini between 1965 (*Juliet of the Spirits*) and 1969, when he starts a series of films in which he develops his ornamental style on the basis of different cultural traditions (*Satyricon*, 1969; *Fellini's Roma*, 1972; *Amarcord*, 1973; *Fellini's Casanova*, 1976). Pasolini turned his back on post-neorealism for good (*The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* [1964] was already a transition towards this change) and made the same move as Fellini toward a highly mythological series in 1967: *Oedipus Rex* (1967), followed by *Teorema* (1968), *Porcile* (1969), *Medea* (1969), *Decameron* (1971), and *Arabian Nights* (1974).

All these films and stylistic turns show that something had changed in modern cinema, and a new period began after 1966 that was like a reinvention or reestablishment of modernism. As Godard said in an interview in 1965:

> Two or three years ago I was convinced that everything had been already made; there was nothing left to do. I couldn't see anything that hadn't been made already. After *Pierrot le fou* I don't have this conviction anymore. Yes, we have to film everything and talk about everything. Everything remains to be done.[1]

One can see quite well the reason for this change of mind. The first period of modernism was concentrating predominantly on reinventing cinema and on redefining the place of the auteur vis-à-vis the cinematic work of art. French new wave filmmakers in particular were in a sense living in film history. Their main references were other works of art past or contemporary. On the other hand, they put pressure on themselves to make *new* films distinguished from old ones and at the same time remain within the tradition. They continuously compared themselves and one another to Rossellini, Hitchcock, Hawks, Ford, and others while claiming that what they were doing was in fact new. This duality was reflected also in their conception

1. "Parlons de 'Pierrot': Nouvel entretien avec Jean-Luc Godard," *Cahiers du cinéma* 171 (October 1965): 21.

about the close relationship between classical and modern cinema. No wonder that after a while Godard felt that this cult of the new based on the old left less and less place for real invention. Modern cinema had to find new inspirations and had to find it some place else than in classical cinema and literary and theatrical traditions.

Godard was not the only one who came to this conclusion. Apparently Bergman had a very similar experience in the middle of the 1960s about the end of an artistic era and a possible new beginning:

> I have the feeling that art (and not only film art) is irrelevant. Literature, painting, music, film, and theater have become self-generated. New mutations, new combinations are born and vanish, and the movement has the appearance of being full of life, a grandiose fury that the artists have in order to project images for themselves and for an audience more and more absentminded about a world that doesn't even care about their opinions. . . . The movement is intense, almost feverish, one has to think of a skin of a snake full of ants. The snake died a long time ago, eaten up, its poison is gone, but the skin is moving, full of vital energy. . . . Man has become free, terribly free, in a dizzying way. Religion and art are being kept alive merely for sentimental reasons, out of mere conventional politeness with regard to the past. . . . Now, the reason why in spite of all this desolation I declare that I want to continue my art is very simple. It is curiosity. . . . I feel as though after a long detention, I've suddenly left the prison and am immersed in this booming, agitated, sensational life. I take notes, I observe, I open my eyes wide, everything is unreal, fantastic, frightening, or ridiculous. I see a blob, maybe there is a film there—what is the relevance of it: none, but that blob interests *me*, so it is a film. . . . This is *my* truth, and nothing else.[2]

Like Godard, Bergman put into words the liberation from a kind of grim disposition provoked by the feeling that modern cinema had nothing left to offer. On the one hand the filmmaker-auteur had achieved total autonomy over the film; and on the other hand he remained alone. It was just this feeling of loneliness that provided the productive force to push on.

The loneliness of the filmmaker-auteur appears as the central topic in three major films produced in 1966 by three great modern auteurs. These films prove more than anything else that the evolution of modern cinema had reached a point where the renewal or the reestablishment of modernism was on the agenda. I mentioned already the significance of these films briefly earlier with regard to the role of the idea of nothingness in modern existen-

2. Ingmar Bergman, "La peau du serpent (Présentation de 'Persona')," *Cahiers du cinéma* 188 (March 1967): 18, emphasis in the original.

tialist philosophy and in modern cinema: Bergman's *Persona*, Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*, and Antonioni's *Blow-Up*. Historically speaking, the appearance of these films in the same year may be a coincidence, but regarding the evolution of modern cinema this coincidence is more than symptomatic.[3] The fact that they appeared in the same year, that they focused on the same problem regarding the modern artist's relationship to society, and that they had very similar answers to this problem are uncontestable signs that reflexivity as one of the distinctive features of modern art became the focus of modern cinema. All three films have become canonized as masterpieces in their respective auteur's career, which is further evidence that we have an important phenomenon here: modern cinema had reached a point where asking questions about its own status and its relationship to society and the rest of the art world became a precondition of its development.

As mentioned above, Fellini in *8 1/2* was the first to broach the subject of overt self-reflexivity. In an indirect manner Resnais and Robbe-Grillet already introduced the *auteur* as the hidden main character of their films before Fellini, but it was Fellini who came out explicitly with the idea, and more importantly, he associated it with the problem of the inability of self-expression. Fellini took the notion of the auteur very seriously, and he took it personally. The auteur in his case is not "an" auteur, as in *Last Year at Marienbad*, it is Fellini as a live person, or rather as a persona of the art world of modern cinema. He was attached to this idea for quite a few years, which is also shown by the fact that the titles of most of his films made after *La dolce vita* all start with the word *Fellini*. In *8 1/2* he does not speak about "the modern artist" who is unable to master his confusion and is unable to organize his thoughts so that he can make a meaningful film for other people; it is none other than Federico Fellini who has remained alone with his confused and confusing memories and desires and who had to face the fact that he has "nothing to say." It is there that the three films of 1966 go further and formulate this problem into a generalized form.

The Loneliness of the Auteur

The three films in question were made in fairly different genres and used different styles. Bergman's film is an excessively reduced closed-situation drama: only four characters appear in the film, but over more than 90 percent of the running time we see only two of them, Elisabeth and Alma in an isolated location. Tarkovsky's film, on the contrary, is an eventful historical

3. Tarkovsky's film was not released publically until 1969.

tableau with long scenes of battle and violence at lots of different locations. The narration is highly episodic with very few causal links between the individual episodes. *Andrei Rublev* belongs to the wandering/search genre as the only thing that connects the episodes is Andrei's wandering around Russia looking for spiritual consolation. Antonioni's film is an investigation film, but it was made in a classical form with very few traces of Antonioni's own modern style. While Tarkovsky was at the beginning of his career, Bergman had entered the middle of his modern period, and Antonioni was about to finish with his radical modernism for a while. The slight difference in their attitudes regarding the destiny of the modern artist illustrates the different positions of the three directors in their modernist careers.

The protagonists of all three films are artists. Tarkovsky's is Andrei Rublev, the famous icon painter from the fourteenth century, *Blow-Up*'s is Thomas, a photographer, and *Persona*'s is Elisabeth, an actress. All three artists find themselves in a crisis: in very different ways they have all lost their art's contact with everyday reality. Andrei is looking for a moral support for icon painting in the world. For him the foundation of art's beauty is the presence of human goodness in society. He becomes hesitant and intimidated when he realizes that he can find nothing but violence, treachery, ignominy, and jealousy in the world. He comes to the conclusion that man does not deserve heavenly art if he does not have a "heavenly face." And because Rublev does not want to menace people with his paintings by mirroring their corrupt nature he gives up all communication with the world. Not only does he stop painting, but he takes a vow of silence too. He keeps this vow both in a concrete and in an artistic sense for many years. Then he encounters a young boy, the son of a deceased bell-founder who takes on the making of a big bell for the grand duke. He knows that if he fails the duke will have him executed. Andrei follows closely the work of the boy, who is not only energetic but also cruel to the men who work for him. He has no doubts whatsoever and seems to know what he is doing. It is only when the bell is finished and tolls as it should that he collapses under the burden of the responsibility: he tells Andrei that in fact he did not have the secret of bell-founding because his father had refused to pass it on to him. He made the bell out of pure inner inspiration and energy alone rather than out of professional competence. Andrei breaks his vow silence and promises to resume painting. He understands that the artist should not expect anything from the outside world. There is nothing out there that can support art. The only thing an artist can rely upon is inner spiritual inspiration. Creation by definition comes out of nothing; the artist is alone in front of the negative energies of the world. The artist does not render or represent positive experiences found in the world;

Fig. 62. Anatoli Solonitsyn and Nikolai Grinko in *Andrei Rublev* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1966).

he rather creates them out of necessity or precisely out of the lack of these experiences. The secret of art is not how reality can be transformed into art, but how it is possible for art to come into being without the stable support of reality behind it.

In Bergman's *Persona* Elisabeth, a famous actress, goes mute in the middle of a tirade onstage during a performance. She is unable to utter a single word anymore and goes to a psychiatric hospital. A nurse, Alma, is assigned to take care of her. After three months of unsuccessful cures the doctor proposes that she take a leave and lends her the cottage she owns on an island. Elisabeth spends weeks there together with Alma, who tries hard to communicate with her. A very personal relationship emerges between the two women and goes through a variety of stages, from deep love to murderous hatred. They deeply influence each other to the point that Alma has a nightmare in which their faces dissolve into one another. In Alma's dream Elisabeth finally utters a word: she whispers to her, "Nothing." However, the film remains open-ended. We don't know when or if Elisabeth starts speaking again, although there is a flash with a film shooting scene suggesting that Elisabeth resumed work. All we know for sure is that Alma has found a word that she wishes Elisabeth will be able to use.

Alma and Elisabeth are opposed to each other in many ways. One of them is a famous actress; the other is a simple nurse. Elisabeth is silent; Alma wouldn't stop talking. Alma wants children and a "normal family"; Elisabeth

Fig. 63. Dissolving faces: Half-faces of Liv Ulmann and Bibi Andersson in *Persona* (Ingmar Berman, 1966.)

has probably gotten ill because of her guilty conscience over the fact that she wanted her son to die even before he was born. Elisabeth is fundamentally selfish and tries to kill the desire for ordinary life in her soul. Alma has a deeply instinctive and affirming attitude toward life. Alma has no distance to her own life; Elisabeth is meditative and tends to withdraw her instinctive self. Her problem is not that she didn't want a child but that she pretended to want one, and couldn't accept herself as anything but an artist. She lied even to herself. Elisabeth is an artist, but she is alienated from everyday life. She cannot accept this alienation, and at the same time she cannot overcome it. That makes her unable to continue as an artist. She pretended to be a "happy mother" while wishing her son to die. The question Bergman asks is very similar to what we find in Tarkovsky's film: how is it possible to continue modern art if ordinary life is in one way or another unacceptable from the point of view of the artist? Both Andrei and Elisabeth deeply despise ordinary attitudes, and they cannot accept violence and cruelty in the world (as suggested in Elisabeth's case by her horror at the cruelty of the images on TV). However they cannot cope with their own estrangement from the "despicable" world. They cannot accept themselves as "estranged" modern artists. That is what leads them to unproductivity and to breaking communication.

Bergman's answer to this problem is very similar to Tarkovsky's: the modern artist has to accept the idea of his or her ultimate loneliness or alienation from the outside world. And at the same time, art has to reconcile with the nothingness of ordinary life and be able to utter, "Nothing." And precisely this "nothing" is what will be a productive starting point for modern art: expecting no support from everyday life means a capability of filling it by art's fully autonomous inner inspiration. But while Tarkovsky contends that

the artist's inner spiritual energy may be sufficient to overcome anxiety and distress caused by the emptiness of ordinary life and also that filling life with the "sacred" is the only way art can recuperate everyday life, Bergman seems less idealistic.

The only word Elisabeth utters in the film is *nothing*. However, it is quite uncertain that she speaks that much at all. She says this at the end of the film in a scene where both of them are again in the hospital, Elisabeth is in the bed, and Alma is sitting at the edge of her bed encouraging her to utter the word. When she finally does it, the scene is over. In the next shot we see Alma waking up in the beach house, and Elisabeth is there too. All this strongly suggests that the hospital scene was only Alma's dream.[4] In this case, Elisabeth does not speak at all throughout the story, which makes any hypothesis about a positive turn in her state highly uncertain. Hence, "Nothing" uttered by Elisabeth is Alma's dream, in other words, it is Alma who realizes what Elisabeth should say. Elisabeth knows about nothingness but does not know how to handle this experience, so her conclusion is to keep silent and kill communication. Alma, on the other hand, is unaware of it. As soon as she reaches this awareness, it appears as an expectation. Alma expects Elisabeth to be able to say it, and it becomes a new starting point for her as an artist. Apparently, modern art for Bergman may recognize nothingness as a starting point only if the audience comes to the realization of the nothingness of life. We do not know really what happens with Elisabeth during this therapy, but we do know that Alma is changed considerably, and now she sees herself as mirrored in Elisabeth's silent and unapproachable persona. When nothingness is reflected in everyday life, modern art is not alien to it anymore.

Antonioni provides a third variation on the same theme. His artist is tired and fed up with the frivolity of his work as a fashion photographer and is looking for ways of deepening his art by photographing social "reality" rather than the phony world of fashion models. As he wanders around in a park, inadvertently, he witnesses a murder, which he photographs without knowing what is really happening in front of his eyes. He realizes what happened only later, and step by step while making bigger and bigger enlargements of the photos. When finally he understands what he witnessed he continues enlarging the pictures until on the final extremely grainy print,

4. In the original scenario Elisabeth's uttering "Nothing" is clearly not in Alma's dream, but the film is considerably different from the published script—in the script Elisabeth starts speaking before uttering this word.

which has already lost all its immediate visual resemblance with reality, he discovers a shape that looks like a dead body. For those, however, who do not know the story of the picture this photo is already rather like an abstract painting. He returns to the park and discovers the body under a bush. But when he returns home he finds that someone has broken into his house, and stolen the negative together with all the prints except the last one with "nonfigurative" shapes on it. But those shapes are not evidence without the whole story, of which there is no other trace. And the next morning the body in the park is gone. All that is left from this story is his memory and a photograph that no one else but him can decipher. His picture about "reality" is a pure abstraction behind which "reality" disappeared.

Again, it is Antonioni's conclusion too that art is alienated from everyday experiences. There is no more direct communication between art and "reality." Reality became a story an artist tells with whatever means he has. Reality became nothingness (something that disappeared), and art has nothing else to start out of. This is exactly what is symbolized in the film's last scene in which some clowns imitate a tennis game on a court with no rackets or balls. Thomas watches them playing, he too follows the "ball" with his eyes until the "ball" falls out of the court in Thomas's direction. Everybody is looking at him expecting him to pick up the "ball" and "throw" it back. Finally Thomas understands that if he wants to belong to the artist community he has to accept the rules of the game: the play with nothingness. Just like in Bergman's film, communication is realized through the idea of nothingness. Art and communication consist of a series of meanings devoid of their reference to reality and backed by nothing but mere conventions and by the belief that someone will "throw back the ball."

All three films' conclusion is that the modern artist has to accept the nothingness or meaninglessness of everyday life as the only *real common experience*. The concept of nothingness is the last remnant of "reality," and therefore the only source of authentic art, and the only way to reestablish contact with other people. None of the artists in these films remain alone at the end: Andrei has Boriska (and vice versa), Elisabeth has Alma (and vice versa), and Thomas has the clowns. For the reward of this acceptance in all of these films is the birth of a certain community: the spiritual community with the "people" for Tarkovsky, personal community with the other "soul" for Bergman, and aesthetic community of the artists for Antonioni. In a certain way these films adopt a vision of modern art that is characteristic of the neomodern or neo-avant-garde period, especially in pop art: alienation of art from everyday life can be recuperated not by refusing the emptiness of everyday life and trying to change it by means of art but by accepting it as it is. The artists in

all three films come to the conclusion that in one way or another they have to submerge into nothingness and accept it, and this is how reintegration into an intellectual/spiritual community is possible. The common experience of nothingness becomes the ultimate moral support for the artist as the only common basis of interpreting the world as a whole. Nothingness becomes the only common knowledge about the loss of positive universal values. And this common knowledge is the ultimate "value" to share with others.

The relation to the concept of nothingness is an important element of the philosophical basis of the modernist aesthetic paradigm. Within this same paradigm, however, it is Antonioni who gets the closest towards moving beyond this paradigm. While both Bergman and Tarkovsky speak about the alienation of the *artist*, thus placing the whole problem of art and nothingness on a moral level, Antonioni places this problem in an epistemological context. Both Tarkovsky and Bergman suppose a spiritual or moral community between artist and ordinary audience. Alma has to reach a certain level of consciousness and reflection to communicate with Elisabeth (and Bergman leaves open the question whether or not this will work at all), and Andrei's ultimate argument is that he wants to bring aesthetic pleasure to people with his art. By contrast, Antonioni only mentions the community of the artists regardless of the problem of art's reception. He does not speak about the moral *responsibility* or *necessity* of modern art, he only speaks about how modern art works. That is why he uses the *game* as art's symbol.

Apparently Antonioni was very much aware of the crisis of modernism in the middle of the 1960s. He realized that his own positive and accepting attitude toward modern society in fact would lead him out of the modernist paradigm, which still supposes a sharp opposition between art and reality. This opposition is part of modernism's romantic heritage, adopted by Antonioni as well in his earlier modern films. From what he tells in the interview with Godard in 1965, we learn that already in *The Red Desert* he came to the conclusion that blanket refusal to engage with the world, which finally results in neurosis, cannot be maintained for very long; a compromise has to be found. He was not sure about the next step, but he was aware that the next step would carry significant aesthetic consequences, and he recognized that this idea is best represented in pop art. He realized that pop art went beyond "serious" modernism:

> [The awareness of the new world] changes the way we see, the way we think; everything changes. Pop art shows that they are looking for different things. One should not underestimate pop art. It is an "ironic" movement, and this self-conscious irony is very important. Pop art painters know very well that they create things the aesthetic value of which has not unfolded yet . . . I think

that it is good that all this has come out. It will accelerate the transformation process in question.[5]

It is remarkable that the "godfather" of modern cinema in the middle of the modernist period comes to realize that modern art is fundamentally based on a schizophrenic relationship between the artist and modernity, and this will finally lead to the dissolution of modernist art itself. Antonioni was probably the first to understand that fact in modern cinema, which is the reason why, unlike Fellini, Bergman, and especially Tarkovsky, he denies all romantic pathos from his characters and is the only one among all these artists who is not committed to finding moral or spiritual salvation in his loneliness as an artist.

Although *Blow-Up* points toward the end of the modernist paradigm, it remains within modernism. One can argue that the story in this film describes in fact the process leading from classical realist art, through modernism, to postmodernism. Thomas recording reality is the classical phase. Thomas analyzing the picture and creating an abstract representation of reality is the modernist phase, and Thomas accepting art as a pure game of nothingness is the postmodern phase. However, as I will show below by comparing Antonioni's *Blow-Up* to Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982), this game is still not the same as what we will find in a real postmodern film about art. Furthermore, the mere fact that Antonioni shows that there is a continuous way leading from reality to abstraction and to the acceptance of nothingness is itself a genuinely modern conception. In postmodern thinking reality does not appear, not even as the transfigured entity in art or as the missing substance. Art becomes a utilitarian means of a restricted and temporary agreement or conspiracy where no fundamental common knowledge about "what is missing" is possible any longer.

The consequence of the crisis of modern art as reflected in these three films is manifold. Not that these films had such an enormous impact on further development of modern art film, but the problems they tackled soon became clear for everyone else and caused significant changes in the course of modern cinema. These three films did not open new routes in modern cinema; they represented a closure rather than a beginning. But they summarized in a powerful and compelling way all the important conclusions of the first phase of the late modern period regarding the relationship between auteur and reality: reality in the modern work of art is nothing but his own mental or ideological creation. No other reality exists behind this.

5. Godard, "La nuit, l'eclipse, l'aurore: Entretien avec Michelangelo Antonioni."

:19:
Political Modernism, 1967–1975

Commenting on the fact that in 1966 Godard made three films in a single year, and comparing him to Sacha Guitry, Michel Delahaye makes the following remarks:

> Guitry's cinema was a cinema of the period between two wars. Godard's cinema is a cinema between two worlds. By then, time stood still; no one knew what was going to happen. Now we know: time has gone crazy. . . . Now everything is in a turbulence, and in this turbulence an old world is agonizing and a new one is about to come into being. In pain and in blood of course. . . . In the sense Céline put it: "The Pithecanthropus changes mythology. Blood will spurt." And in the films of Godard blood spurts. . . . We can see that the urgency to show and to say leads to the urgency of formal, economic, and political subversion.[1]

The apocalyptic tone of these remarks was certainly inspired by the mounting political tension in Western societies, reflected immediately in Godard's sudden shift toward a certain political radicalism in *Made in U.S.A.* and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her.* And Delahaye obviously could not know that these two films were nothing when compared with what Godard would do the next year in terms of political radicalism (although he mentions already *La Chinoise*). Not to mention the year after, and the year after that . . .

If the driving force behind "romantic modernism" was a critique of conventional forms of cinematic representation, and a desire to reinvent art cinema according to a personal, subjective experience, which was true for almost every trend of modern cinema of the early 1960s, in the second

1. Michel Delahaye, "Jean-Luc Godard ou l'urgence de l'art," *Cahiers du cinéma* 187 (February 1967): 29.

Fig. 64. "And in the films of Godard blood spurts": *Week-end* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967).

half of the decade, the general emphasis was on the reinvention of the concept of reality. While the main question of the first period was "what is new cinema?" in the middle of the 1960s this was no longer a theoretical question. The question changed to "What does that new cinema relate to?" Two things motivated this shift. One is certainly to be found in the evolution of modernism, which had to face a paradox that could not be resolved within the classical modernist paradigm based on the radical rejection of the banality of everyday life. Art and film history provided no more inspiration for further renewal of modern cinema. In one way or another some new construction of "reality" had to be found.

The Year 1968

The other source was reality itself: the taking shape of radical political and social movements in Western societies and, in quite different forms, also in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. These movements led to the general upheaval of 1968: student movements in the United States and in Western Europe, workers demonstrations and strikes in Poland, moderate economic reforms in Hungary, and radical political reforms in Czechoslovakia provoking the Soviet invasion of the country. Historically these political

movements emerged from very different political situations in different countries: the Vietnam war and racial segregation in the United States, rigidity and the repressive nature of cultural and educational institutions in France and Germany, and the despotism of the political systems in post-Stalinist Central Europe. However different the cultural and political backgrounds of these movements were, and as chaotic and divergent the ideologies they adopted in response were, they all converged around a few general propositions:

- From the individual's point of view the difference in a modern society is not between capitalism and socialism or between political right and left, but between individual freedom and collective repression.[2] As student leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit said, "I am neither capitalist, nor communist. Eventually, I would go beyond the iron curtain to organize student power."[3]
- Any form of institutionalized social hierarchy is a form of repression.
- Cultural traditions and institutions are the means of social repression of the individual, and the educational system is meant to conserve the traditional hierarchical system by means of ideological indoctrination.
- Social hierarchy is maintained by the conscious manipulation of the individual's needs and desires. Sexual relations as well as the family are the nuclear form of social repression.
- Self-determination must start with the liberation of desires and of the unconscious.[4] The individual must be liberated from all forms of hierar-

2. "Repression today is mainly characterized by the continuation of alienated labor and services in a situation in which such alienated labor could be largely abolished. Repression is further characterized by the obvious and widespread decline in individual freedom, the decline of independent thought and expression. In other words, instead of an increasing tendency toward self-determination, towards the individual's ability to determine his own existence, his own life, we have the opposite: the individual appears to be increasingly powerless, confronted with the technological and political apparatus that this society has built up." Herbert Marcuse, "The Containment of Social Change in Industrial Society," talk presented at Stanford University, May 4, 1965, in Douglas Kellner, ed., *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 84.

3. Cited in Alain Ayache, ed., *Les citations de la révolution de Mai* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert Éditeur, 1968), 64.

4. "Can we really still speak of an unconscious (in the sense in which Freud used the term) when this unconscious has become so easily subject to social management—through the techniques of publicity, industrial psychology, or the science of human relations." Marcuse, "The Containment of Social Change in Industrial Society," 88. And cf. the

chical dependence, be it sexual, ideological, or those related to politics or work.

- All kinds of mental realities are equally valid, as the ones supporting the reality of dominant social hierarchy. As graffiti at the Sorbonne spelled out: "I take my desires as a reality, because I believe in the reality of my desires."
- The only imaginable future of the society is what seems impossible from the dominant social and ideological structure. Therefore political actions must be guided by a sense of utopia. As the most famous graffiti of 1968 had it: "Be realist, claim what is impossible!"

Fundamentally, the 1968 new left ideology revolved around the idea of self-determination and emancipation of the individual from traditional institutions backed by traditional mental patterns and attitudes. The novelty and power of this thought resided in that it rehearsed the Marxist theory about the power of ideology as the manifestation of class interests, but at the same time it disconnected this idea from the historical dialectics of property relations, emphasizing instead the problem of control of desires, imagination, and organization of labor. Thus repression and freedom were regarded as absolute values rather than as dependent on the historical dialectics of class struggle for the means of production. As a consequence, no institutionalized violence and repression could be justified on the basis of historical necessity.[5] This is how American and Soviet post-Stalinist imperialism could be criticized at the same time. This was also the reason why China and Maoist radicalism became fashionable for a certain period among revolutionary radicals. Maoism appeared as a third way between bureaucratic communist repression and consumerist capitalism's militarist repression, but also its extremist form, the "cultural revolution," seemed to follow the same direction of intellectual reeducation proposed also by the new left. For radical western students Maoism seemed to be the way to establish a nonhierarchical grassroots communitarian society of autonomous individuals, and its eventual repressive nature was regarded as spontaneous revolutionary violence rather than sustained and institutionalized violence.

The year 1968 was a revolt against a certain mentality engendering a certain social structure and power relations rather than an organized revolution driven to overturn the established political power. As Daniel

---

category of humans as "desiring machines" in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *L'anti-Oedipe: Capitalism et schizophrénie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1973).

5. Marcuse emphasized that grassroots democracy cannot be achieved by violence, only by reeducation. See *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972).

Cohn-Bendit put it, "We are not revolutionists because we don't have a well-defined program of action. The category that would certainly fit us the best is the revolted. Yes, we are in a revolt. Yes, we have had enough."[6] However violent the manifestations turned out to be at certain points, it was not directed at seizing the institutions of state power. As Herbert Marcuse, the main ideologist of the New Left, put it: "[D]irect assault on the centers of political control (the state), backed and carried out by mass action under the leadership of centralized mass parties—such strategy is not, and cannot be, on the agenda in the advanced capitalist countries."[7] French prime minister Georges Pompidou was surprised and relieved when after the first day of the Paris riot he was informed that no institutions of national communication or military and police installations were attacked. This meant for him that this was not a "serious" revolution, so he decided not to interrupt his visit in Iran. He returned to Paris only a week after the riots broke out.

The main reasons for the "limited aggression" of the '68 movement was the recognition, first, that the well-organized military and police power of the Western states would have made all such attempts illusory; and second, that attempting to take over the institutions of power would have been contrary to the antihierarchical, antiestablishment, nonconformist, grassroots spirit of the movement itself. But the most important recognition was, to use Marcuse's words again, "the prevalence of a reformist consciousness among the working classes."[8] "Reformist consciousness" is a euphemism, as "ordinary people are just satisfied with liberal consumer capitalism, and they are not ready to support any revolutionary movement against it." The 1968 movement was not supported by the great majority of ordinary people satisfied in their immediate material needs. In the Western societies, '68 was an intellectual movement for liberating social institutions so that they tolerate diversity of ways of life, of imagination, and of desire and accept values not related to maintaining traditional social hierarchy or consumerism.

The situation was obviously quite different in Czechoslovakia, where the '68 movement involved also an institutional political struggle for the leadership of the Communist party. Here the "imaginary" dimension of the movement met with the immediate material needs of most of the people, and that is what provoked the Soviet-led military invasion of the country. That difference manifested itself also in the aftermath of the events. In the Western democracies the repercussions were rather positive inasmuch as in

6. Ayache, *Les citations de la révolution de Mai*, 18.

7. Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, 43.

8. Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, 43.

most countries the higher educational systems and most cultural institutions were radically reformed, becoming much more liberalized and flexible. The uprising in Paris was still not over, when Alain Peyrefitte, resigned minister of education, declared on May 29, "The imperial university, and the high school barracks are over. Professors, students, pupils, an entirely new University awaits you." Different emancipatory movements, equal rights as well as environmentalist political movements, could start to develop, and the end of the Vietnam war was to a great extent due to the '68 movement. For many leftist ideologists, however, the movement of '68 was a failure, since it became clear that the masses of the democratic societies would not give up consumer values or their loyalty for the bourgeois establishment, which was well shown by the controversy between student associations and the worker's unions in France. Nevertheless, liberal democracies have proven their ability for adaptation by incorporating important ideological and political elements of the '68 spirit, even though the consistent New Left approach complained of an "appropriation" of '68 values.

In Central Europe the situation was just the opposite. The violent backlash of the Prague Spring proved that the very essence of the communist dictatorship in all of its forms was centralized bureaucratic hierarchy and the radical limitation of individual liberties. It became clear that this political system was not flexible and could not absorb any kind of emancipatory concessions. Many people were imprisoned, many left the country; the intellectual life in Czechoslovakia was frozen for at least the next eight years to come. In Poland and in Hungary a new witch hunt began against the fraction of the intelligentsia that supported the '68 movements, which led to similar imprisonments and massive emigration. But that became also the source of the underground political opposition movements in these countries that emerged during the 1970s. The realization that political regimes based on communist ideology were antithetical to the principles of individual emancipation also contributed to the disillusionment and crisis of the '68 intellectuals.

The difference of the '68 experience in the West and in the East was evident also in its impact on the development of individual national cinemas. The ending of the movements in late 1968 did not result in a spectacular stylistic or thematic break in French, German, or Italian cinema, whereas in Czechoslovakia the year 1968 put a radical end to the Czechoslovak new wave that had just really started to unfold around 1966. As the "new" conservative regime loyal to Moscow was only able to solidify its power by mid-1969, a good number of important new wave films in production in 1968 or in early

1969 were still released in 1969,[9] but by the end of this year the "iron curtain" sealed the Czechoslovak new wave for good. The year 1969 represented a significant stylistic and thematic turning point for Hungarian cinema also even if there were no brutal reprisals comparable to what happened in Czechoslovakia. One single Hungarian film was banned in 1968, a bitter satire by Péter Bacsó, *The Witness*,[10] but other than that political censorship did not affect the film industry.

Conceptual Modernism: The Auteur's New World

Not taking into consideration the general intellectual and political atmosphere dominating the societies of the Western hemisphere would mean missing an important point that had a substantial impact on the second period of modernist cinema. While the beginning of modernism was driven by influences coming from within the art world and film history itself, the main determining factor of the second phase of modernism was rather the ideological and political environment. Basically no sectors of art cinema remained intact from the influence of the "new reality" around it, although the different responses of these trends varied widely. However, when I use the term "political modernism" to describe this period, it is not only to refer to the direct impact of politics on modern cinema but also to designate a more self-conscious, ideologically based filmmaking style that dominated this period as opposed to the more emotional, subjective, or instinctive attitude of the first period.

All the trends of the period of political modernism derive from the same basic experience of the mid-1960s: not only traditional forms of representation became void but perceived reality also started to change dramatically around cinema. Cinema of the 1950s was obsolete but so was the reality of the 1950s. The common experience of the mid-1960s as reflected in modern cinema was that a certain sense of reality had disappeared. There was a strong sense of radical transformation, which at the same time could not be formulated in solid sociological and economic facts like at the time of

9. Including *The End of the Priest*, *The Cremator*, *The Deserter and the Nomads*, *The Joke*, *All My Good Countrymen*, *Larks on a Thread*, *Ecce Homo Homolka*, *Funeral Rites*, *Seventh Day*, *Eighth Night*, *Adrift*, and *A Case for the Rookie Hangman*.

10. Even this film's banning was not absolute. It was not allowed to be shown publicly, but regular private screenings were allowed during the time it was banned. Over this ten-year period the master copy got so used that several more copies had to be made, so when the film was finally released in 1978, several thousand people had already seen it.

neorealism. The only support the filmmaker had was his own imagination or ideology about what kind of reality was about to come into being. That same recognition led Godard to say in 1965, "Nothing has been made yet. Everything remains to be done."[11]

There is more to this idea than the romantic egocentrism of the modernism of the early sixties. There is the recognition that the auteur is not only the master of a work of art but also the auteur of a certain coherent vision of reality—an alternate universe of which the work of art is the most authentic expression. The auteur is not only the center of the film but also the focus of a reality envisioned in the film. The auteur is not only making a film but he has to create a whole universe of his own, whether constructed of factual or imaginary elements. These universes are not meant to be "real" in the sense of empirical experience, they are rather meant to stand for the "real." This idea was not independent from the vast trend of conceptual art taking shape just about the same period, which is why we can give another name to this period: conceptual modernism.

I can see four important interrelated but quite distinct points that shaped the basic trends of the post-1967 period of European modern cinema. First, cinema has to reconstruct the concept of reality. Second, cinema can be used as a means of direct political action, and films should exercise a direct impact on social, political, or ideological debates. Third, cinematic narration is a form of direct auteurial and conceptual discourse. And fourth, the artist must create a self-contained ideological or mythological universe.

These principles are closely related to one another, yet in many films we see them being manifested separately. For example, Godard's *The Joy of Knowledge* (1968) is a film of direct auteurial discourse but it is in no way an attempt to "reinvent" any kind of reality nor it is conceived as a means of political action, while *La Chinoise* (1967) was meant to contribute to the actual political debate around Maoism[12] without being a direct ideological self-expression of the auteur and without constructing a self-contained auteurial or mythological universe. Early new German films, especially those of Schlöndorff, Fleischmann, and Kluge, were a new look at contemporary German social reality without any direct political involvement. Although some of these films can be regarded as self-conscious ideological discourses, they do not show much of a constructed and self-contained mythological

11. "Parlons de 'Pierrot': Nouvel entretien avec Jean-Luc Godard," 21.

12. Godard brought this film to the Chinese embassy to declare his support for Chinese politics, but the Chinese diplomats did not appreciate this kind of contribution to the official Chinese political orientation.

or ideological universe. By contrast, in Pasolini's *Oedipus Rex* (1967) and in *Medea* (1969) we find a spectacularly constructed mythological universe together with direct ideological discourses, with very little references to actual social reality, while in his *Teorema* (1968) and *Porcile* (1969), as well as in Bertolucci's *The Partner* (1968), we find all the four aspects of political modernism. Finally, Fellini's or Paradzhanov's as well as Fassbinder's early works in this period are highly stylized and mythologized universes without political implications or direct auteurial discourse whatsoever.

Reconstructing Reality

Direct cinema style during the first period of modernism involved a certain attitude of fidelity to empirical reality understood either as an image of social conditions, as in post-neorealism, or as a behavior system like in cinéma vérité. What we find in the second period instead is a strengthening of a highly critical approach in realism with a clear manifestation of the auteur's political and ideological bias. Reality is not represented or discovered, it is rather reconstructed according to ideological stances.

The originality of one important trend of the Czechoslovak new wave (Forman, Passer, Chytilová) in 1963 as compared to cinéma vérité or neorealism was already a certain type of subjective, ironic approach to reality effectuated by means of direct cinema. Ironic realism of Forman and Passer prioritized auteur's judgment over reality rather than faithful description of social facts. The realist trend of the new German cinema starting in 1966 especially with Kluge, Schlöndorff, and Fleischmann reinforced that aspect of modern realism. Thomas Elsaesser is right in his remark that the new German cinema's conception of realism cannot be explained by any reference to documentary filmmaking, cinéma vérité, or neorealism.[13] Their direct-style films bore auteurial judgments to an even greater extent than the Czechoslovak films as their direct auteurial presence in the film prevailed through self-conscious representation of ideological or political stances rather than through irony. This was related to the biographical background of many new German directors: Kluge, Künckelmann, and Bohm had left legal careers for filmmaking, Schlöndorff had been a social scientist, and Syberberg was a literary historian. In their films "reality" is not a representation of social facts but a reconstruction of some subjective approach to reality on the basis of some clear personal commitment. This is what

13. Cf. Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 161.

Elsaesser calls the "cinema of experiences" aimed at particular "spectatorial dispositions."[14]

Alexander Kluge's theoretical writings about realism, considerably influenced by Bertolt Brecht's conception of political art, are enlightening regarding much of new German cinema's conception about the relationship between auteurship and realism. The realist method, says Kluge, is by definition a protest against existing social reality. There are two kinds of realism: one records the facts without human interaction, the other records human responses to the facts. And the two are always contradictory: "Either social history tells its reality novel with no regard to the individual, or the individual tells his counter-history." It is not reality that dictates the stories for the auteur, it is the auteur who tells his stories against factual reality. He calls realist method a "Protestarbeit" (protest work). What provides a background for this protest is not a general historical or political concept but individual fantasy, which mediates between the individuals' understanding of the social environment. Realism in art in the final analysis is a work of fantasy motivated by the individual's protest against existing social reality. This conception clearly goes against the social disengagement of the French new wave in all of its forms, and it is also contrary to the sheer sociological character of traditional neorealism. However, it is more consciously critical of social reality than the moralizing post-neorealist trend of early Olmi or Pasolini. The realist trend of new German cinema was characteristically "issue-oriented," but precisely the strong personal commitment of the auteurs with regard to the issue treated in a given film expressed unambiguously made them highly personal (protest) statements of the auteur.[15] These films did not lack some degree of irony or satirical characterization toward their subjects. But unlike Czechoslovak satirical realism, they did not concentrate on a general representation of a mentality or a way of life; they rather narrowed their scope and gave a powerful vision of social reality from the point of view of specific social issues and specific ideological stances.

New German cinema reconstructed social reality from a concentrated personal and critical auteurial point of view rather than withdrawing into a contemplative, ironic position. That gives also a stylistic sense to the conception of reconstructing reality. New German cinema directors did not follow the neorealist tradition of continuous recording of everyday life, which the

14. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 162.

15. Thomas Elsaesser is right to point out that no difference can be made between "issue-oriented" and "auteur-oriented" films or directors in new German cinema, but that the two must be considered as a joint phenomenon. Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, 52–56.

Czech new wave naturalist directors did. Their model was Bresson and above all Godard in their highly fragmented and elliptical narrative and visual styles. Alexander Kluge's first breakthrough, *Yesterday Girl* (1966), was almost like a German version of *My Life to Live*. Kluge used the same episodic picaresque form as Godard to tell the story of a young girl (quite reminiscent of Godard actress Anna Karina), who is quite helpless about what to do with her life, drifting from one situation to another aimlessly, always winding up in irregular situations such as not paying her hotel bills and stealing some petty objects. Just like Nana in Godard's film, she meets a variety of people from different layers of society, from criminals to high intellectuals, but none of them are really willing or able to help her. Nana is killed at the end, and Anita is back in prison. Kluge follows Godard also in separating the different episodes by titles, and by using real locations and a lot of nonprofessional actors. Kluge's style is however even more fragmented and elliptical than Godard's. His plot has virtually no causal coherence. After Anita is released from prison at the beginning of the film, the episodes become quite interchangeable as time and causal ellipses between episodes are so big. Everything Anita tries leads to failure, so there is not much plot or character development either in the film. In its highly elliptical structure the film is very Bressonian also. Scenes are very short, their length is dictated mainly by the length of the verbal acts taking place in them. Very often the dramatic situation is not even elucidated, we do not know where we are, what the situation is, we only watch and listen to what the characters have to say and then the scene is over. It is as if the film consisted merely of a mosaic of verbal comments on different aspects of Anita's life rather than the entire story of her life. In other words, the reality of this life is reconstituted by these short ideological fragments that are meant by Kluge to represent a cross-section of a given social reality.

Peter Fleischmann's *Hunting Scenes from Lower Bavaria* (1968) is more conventional than Kluge's film but is nonetheless a good example of this attitude. This film's "issue" is the intolerance reigning in traditional communities. The realist, almost documentary-style, description of the peasants' everyday life is concentrated around the manifestations of the narrow-minded intolerance they have toward all kinds of difference, be it sexual, racial, religious, or that of physical or mental impairment. Fleischmann does not give an extensive realist description of their lives, showing "neutral" events where the villagers only live their "normal life." (That is where he differs from the traditional and post-neorealist.) He puts everything they do or say in the perspective of his "issue." Even the bucolic scene of the traditional pig killing becomes subject to the critical approach as Fleischmann emphasizes the violent and disgusting aspect of this otherwise quite neutral activity.

The only relatively neutral event is the Catholic mass shown in the credit sequence. But right after the villagers come out of the church, they start their verbal aggression directed against everyone who is "different" in one way or another in the village. This will become even more harsh and violent when the main character, a young homosexual, arrives from the big city. The film gives a concentrated, almost unbearable vision of traditional German mentality, which at some points may be satirical or ironic, but in no way disengaged (which is where it differs from cinéma vérité). The film provides Fleischmann's auteurial and critical reconstruction of a reality from an undisguisedly biased point of view, and the auteur does not allow this reality to display its more neutral aspects. It is realism in the full sense as Kluge defined it: representation by direct cinema methods, protest attitude vis-à-vis the reality described, emphasis on difference of desire and fantasy. And that is what reconstruction of "reality" means in terms of political modernism's realist trend: the use of certain stylistic elements traditionally associated with documentary, cinéma vérité, or neorealist films to represent a social issue with an overt auteurial bias.

The same critical attitude appeared in relation to the conception of reality in a new documentary trend in Hungary in 1969, and the critical tone present from the beginning of the Czechoslovak new wave increased after 1966. As a matter of fact, as critical tone mounted, loose direct film style tended to disappear from the Czechoslovak films. None of the three representatives of Czechoslovak new ironic realism continued their direct film methods after 1965. In 1966 Vera Chytilová made her famous film, *Daisies*, in a capricious surrealistic style. Forman made in 1967 *The Firemen's Ball*, a satirical closed-situation parable that was more like a comedy than a documentary-style drama. Ivan Passer did not make any more films in Czechoslovakia after 1965. Surrealism with expressionist elements became the dominant style in this period and took over ironic realism, epitomized by the films by Jan Nemec (*A Report on the Party and the Guests*, *The Martyrs of Love*), Evald Schorm (*Return of the Prodigal Son*, 1966; and *The Parson's End*, 1969) or Juraj Herz (*The Cremator*, 1968). Not only was documentary style not present in these films, but the image of reality was filtered through a strong visionary construction. Even in Forman's *The Firemen's Ball*, which is among the most realist-style films of the period, the accumulating of exaggerated and comic elements necessary for the satire and for the parable to work makes the reality seem unreal or absurd. In none of his earlier films did Forman want to make a concentrated and general picture about reality as a coherent structure. His earlier films gave an ironic view about the narrow-minded mentality of the Czechoslovak petty bourgeoisie, but he never meant to generalize this mentality to

reflect on a whole society's functioning. Obviously his purpose here was not to ironically depict certain phenomena of the reality but to construct a conceptual model. His "issue" was to show how provincial stupidity and lack of moral scruples spoil everything in a society and turn all the good causes into their antithesis. Beauty contests become humiliation of the girls; decorating the honorary president becomes impossible, because someone steals the decoration together with the rest of the rewards, and finally while entertaining themselves at the ball, a house burns down in the neighborhood because the fireman have other things to do.

An interesting and transitional case in this trend was provided by Belgian director Chantal Ackerman in 1975 by her first film, *Jeanne Dielman, 53 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles.* This is a film whose style could be characterized as "hyperrealist." Ackerman follows the everyday life of a middle-class woman living with her adolescent son in her apartment. She shows every little detail of her life including the most banal elements. A picture is drawn about a correct and most decent middle-aged woman who keeps everything orderly and tidy. There is not one dramatic moment in the film, and after a while the only thing that holds the viewer's attention is the question, what does this woman do for a living, as this is the only information that is withheld in the biggest part of the film. Ackerman constructs a kind of everyday reality in a such banal and meticulous way that it becomes provocative, for the focus of the construction seems to be missing. Later on in the film Ackerman starts providing some clues as to something unexpected that is happening in this apartment, until it becomes clear that Jeanne Dielman, while a decent middle-class housewife, makes her living through prostitution. And at the very end Ackerman goes even further by showing Jeanne Dielman killing one of her clients for no apparent reason. In this film Ackerman systematically overturns realism in that she makes it the descriptive methodology of an absurd vision about reality. The reality she reconstructs via realism is a totally visionary fiction not because her story could not happen in reality, but because she presents the aggressive contrast between the patterns of the decent middle-class way of life and the brutal instinct-driven acts of prostitution and killing as a provocative general statement about middle-class mentality without reference to any explanatory background whatsoever. On the one hand, Ackerman repeats the idea articulated already in Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know About Her,* but on the other hand she disconnects it from all concrete social, political, or ideological contexts and at the same time places it in a very different stylistic context of hyperrealism, which is no less provocative than Godard's fragmented collage style eight years earlier. Ackerman's film is a radical statement about any kind of

realism in the cinema inasmuch as it shows how reality as a stack of facts conceals its essence, in this case, a brutal psychological truth.

There is another aspect of critical reconstruction of reality that concerns a stylistic trend in this period. In one of his essays published in 1969, Jean-Louis Comolli called attention to a tendency in more and more fiction films of different styles to adopt some degree of direct film methodology.[16] Even though Comolli generalizes his idea in such a way that it ends up covering every film that had any degree of improvisation during the production process (whereby the filmmaker "recorded" reality) his initial observation seems to be correct.[17] One can observe at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s a good number of films in which the use of loose, newsreel-style handheld camerawork, direct sound, "unprepared" real locations, or even inclusion of some footage of reportage combined with fiction narratives were meant to increase the sense of reality in the films. This method became so fashionable

that it appeared in a large variety of genres, styles not even related to modernism, or it was just by this method that the director wanted to relate his film to modernism. Just to mention a few examples: Jacques Rivette's *Crazy Love* (1969), Barbet Schroeder's *More* (1969), Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point* (1968), and Bo Widerberg's *Adalen Riots* (1968). Even a director of a highly abstract and theatrical style such as Ingmar Bergman was not exempt of the influence of this trend. In his *Passion* (1969) he interrupts the film from time to time, and interviews the actors, who give their interpretations of the parts they play. Or in *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), during the credit sequence we can hear the noises of a film studio during shooting. Although this technique was marginal in the Bergman films he took it very seriously at the time. When asked about his use of alienating effects considered as a novelty in his films, Bergman claimed that in fact it was not the French new wave that had influenced him in this respect, rather the other way around.[18]

16. Jean-Louis Comolli, "Le détour par le direct, I" *Cahiers du cinéma* 209 (1969): 48–53 and "Le détour par le direct, II" *Cahiers du cinéma* 211 (1969): 40–45.

17. Comolli's biggest mistake is without doubt to include Jancsó in this trend merely on the basis that Jancsó does not have a predetermined plan about the choreography or the dialogues of the characters, and so most of the movements of the characters and the camera are determined during the shooting process. Needless to say, none of this appears in any detail of Jancsó's films, which is one of the many reasons why Jancsó's and Godard's styles are so different.

18. Relating to the scene in *Breathless* where Belmondo addresses the audience, Bergman mentions a long close-up in *A Summer with Monika*, where Harriet Andersson looks straight into the camera: "It is possible that this film provided an impulse for the

Comolli refers to this new trend in fiction cinema as a tendency aimed at discovering a different vision of reality. Not a different way of recording the same reality but the recording of a different reality. This different kind of reality is closely related with the making of the film, but it is not just about the making of the film, it is about the ways reality can be reconstituted through cinema. Comolli sees also a political meaning in the rejection of the repressive methodology of preestablished fiction, which he identifies with forms and methods of the mainstream film industry. Reconstitution of reality by direct film methods is also a redefinition of cinema and of its relation to reality. In direct cinema methodology, Comolli says, "action does not control the production process, action is rather a product of this process." It is sure that the use of direct cinema methods in fiction films at this time indicated a tendency of many filmmakers to relate their fiction stories to some reality experience, whatever the content or the meaning of this reality was. It was a sign that filmmakers conceived of their films as personal comments on reality rather than as abstract artistic visions.

Counter-Cinema: Narration as Direct Auteurial Discourse

"In this film everything happens by words," Marguerite Duras says commenting her first film, *La musica*, made in 1966. This statement could be an epitome of the attitude that characterized many films of political modernism. Two aspects of this attitude are worth attention. One is that since modern cinema as such is fundamentally informed by the central position of the auteur right from its beginning, it comes as no surprise that the clues of auteurial intervention in the film form became more and more overt or even aggressive in the second period of modernism. The other aspect is that auteurial self-expression manifested itself to an increasing degree in verbal utterances in this period. We will examine first this second phenomenon.

We can distinguish different uses of the technique of verbal discourses that are independent from the dramatic situation. One case is the general dramatic construction of subordinating narrative action to verbal utterances in scenes where the characters talk to the camera or make speeches to one another. This became most widespread and fashionable around 1965, and was widely used in films by young filmmakers inspired by Godard, like

---

new wave auteurs, since it showed how simple it is to do cinema. It is enough to put down the camera and you can start shooting." "La mort à chaque aube: Entretien avec Ingmar Berman sur 'L'Heure du Loupe,'" *Cahiers du cinéma* 203 (August 1968): 51.

Bertolucci or Sjöman. This can be basically pointed out as the distinctive feature of the essay film genre. Some typical examples of this are Bertolucci's *Before the Revolution* and *The Partner,* Godard's *Masculine-Feminine*, *Made in U.S.A.*, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her,* and *La Chinoise*, Sjöman's *I Am Curious (Yellow)*, Kovács's *Walls* (1968), Gutierrez Alea's *Memories of Underdevelopment*, Volker Schlöndorff's *Coup de grâce* (1976), and Jean Eustache's *The Mother and the Whore* (1973). These films were based on more or less theoretical dialogues about various topics (mainly sex, politics, and philosophy), and the plot was but a loose frame for staging situations that provided opportunities for characters to verbally communicate or exchange ideas.

The most extreme cases of the verbal dominance of the plot can be found in Marguerite Duras's films in the mid-1970s at the very end of the modernist period. The most famous of this series is her *India Song* (1975), but the most radical of all without any doubt is *The Truck* (1977). In this film, rather then "telling" a story through images, she literally *tells* the story of a film she was planning to make. In 95 percent of the film we watch her sitting in an armchair describing her film to actor Gérard Dépardieu, who is sitting and listening to the story.

It was a general feeling among modern auteurs that traditional cinematic conventions were an obstacle to direct self-expression. But many auteurs of political modernism felt also that aesthetic forms as such were nothing but a means to divert attention from the "important" issues. When speaking of his first film, *Not Reconciled* (1965), Jean-Marie Straub, one of the most self-consciously modernist auteurs, formulated this idea very clearly:

> I borrow the terminology of Barthes: there is art, writing (*l'écriture*), and style. *Not Reconciled* was made deliberately with no art. What remained was only style and writing. . . . There was even a terrorist ambition to eliminate art at the beginning, in order to explode the glass wall that I constantly find in cinema between reality and myself. This terrorism was effective also against all forms of symbolism.[19]

"Elimination of art" and "terrorism" are good expressions to illustrate what modernist radicalism was up to and, at the same time, what kind of attitude brought the auteur-cinema into crisis in the 1970s. Twenty years earlier filmmakers still had to struggle for the recognition of their legal and moral rights to auteurship. The 1950s brought a considerable shift in the general perception of the film director's role in the production process,

19. Michel Delahaye, "Entretien avc Jean-Marie Straub," *Cahiers du cinéma* 180 (July 1966): 52–56.

resulting not only in legal recognition of the director as an auteur but also in awarding him primary moral recognition over other collaborators and auteurs of the film. It was not long before films about the loneliness of the filmmaker appeared as part of the general crisis of modern art. And here we are with a statement of a modern filmmaker who actually considers cinema as an obstacle between himself and reality! And Straub was not alone in thinking about cinema as something that had to be cleansed of everything that is not a direct support of the auteur's ideas about society, history, or the world as such. This is the main underlying idea of a certain "anticinema" trend that starts around this time in the films of Straub and Godard, joined later by different avant-garde filmmakers and also by some well-established art-film directors like Pasolini (*Teorema*, *Porcile*), Bertolucci (*The Partner*), and Makavejev *(Sweet Movie*). This trend is often but not necessarily linked to verbal dominance in the narrative.

Again, Godard was the first to systematically use this device. It was first in *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* that he began to use his auteurial commentaries as a disruptive motive in the film. In *Band of Outsiders* his voice-over narration was still rather conventional inasmuch as it was a commentary on the plot, even if it sometimes became overwhelming. In *Two or Three Things I Know About Her,* voice-over narration was entirely disconnected from the plot (if we can speak of a plot at all), and became a continuous monologue of the auteur about general political and social issues, which the plot seen on the screen was meant to illustrate. The film clearly follows the Brechtian method of disrupting the fiction by making the actors step out of their roles, introducing themselves to the camera and acting as if they were being interviewed. In some scenes they alternatively play their fictive roles and talk to the camera as they were in a real-life situation. Godard however did not pretend to represent real-life situations in a cinéma vérité sense, just like the actors did not pretend that they themselves had formulated the ideas they spoke about. Everything is subordinated to Godard's own verbal discourse, which the speeches merely elaborate. The illustrative and didactic tendency of the film is clearly stated in the title sequence, which says: "Eighteen lessons about industrial society."

Godard separates verbal text and visual image very consciously in several ways. Other than off-topic comments by the actors, one can mention Godard's own voice-over, which is made in a low voice so that his commentaries sound more like a special auteurial attitude rather than narration. Isolation of verbal text is emphasized by a recurring scene in the film where two young men read different citations from books they randomly pick out of a huge stack. Godard directly comments on this separation when he says

Fig. 65. Like in a cartoon world: *Pierrot le fou* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965).

Fig. 66. Like in a cartoon world: *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1966).

in the film that "to live in contemporary society is like living in a cartoon world," referring to the discrete pictorial and written signs that surround us everywhere. Godard also tends to create a sense of cartoon style in the film by very static compositions that were unusual in his earlier films.

However unusual or provocative this film seems compared to earlier "unusual" Godard films it does not "terrorize" in the sense that it respects basic spectator attitudes regarding some form of identification either with the characters or with the verbal discourse. *Week-end* is his first real aggressive counter-cinema film. In this film he deliberately and consciously provoked the viewer by scenes that lasted three–four time longer than it would have been required by the narrative material, just because Godard mechanically repeated the same motive over and over again; with ornamental scenes of car accidents; with scenes having anachronistic characters in them, like Emily Brontë; with the characters' verbal statements, like "How did I get into this film?"; and also with various title inserts including "This is a film found in a trash can," "This is a film lost in the Universe," and "A trash-film." In addition to providing a picture of the underlying violence in human relations in society and creating a form that does not let the viewer forget that she is watching a film, Godard's goal was also to eliminate everything that conventionally provides the viewer with the comfort of watching a film. It was not only a provocation against moral sense but also against aesthetic sensibility. Godard wanted the act of watching his film to be as painful as participating in the reality depicted would have been: "By *Week-end* I wanted to represent

monsters in a monstrous film—a film that is a monster itself."[20] This was exactly the kind of "elimination of art," discussed by Straub, understood as something that diverts attention from the important things. The film form and not just its verbal manifestations became a direct articulation of a discourse about enlightened industrial civilization falling back into barbarism and cannibalism. Godard went even further in his next film, *The Joy of Knowledge* (1968), which totally lacks any real sets and realistic situation. Godard's concept behind this film was that cinema has to be reconstructed from individual sounds, words, and images because their conventional connections have lost their credibility. The film consists of a series of chaotic dialogues between two persons sitting in the dark, and their dialogues are interrupted from time to time by all kind of images taken from television commercials, films, documentary footage, or cartoons. Godard's idea is best illustrated by a sentence of the female character: "If you want to see the world, close your eyes." Godard was aware of the extreme radical character of his film, as witnessed by his last sentence in the film: "This is not a film to be imitated. Cinema shouldn't be like this film."

Even if Godard's counter-cinema films are difficult to watch with ordinary moviegoer expectations, they all have some kind of intriguing and carefully composed visual texture: the different types of intertitles and the ornamental composition of accident scenes in *Week-end*, the flickering of different types of images in *The Joy of Knowledge*, the mechanical camera movements and theatrical setting in *All's Well* (not to mention the two movie stars, Jane Fonda and Yves Montand), the split screen and explicit sex scenes in *Number Two*. Godard used these textures in a highly provocative way, yet he provided visual excitement, which makes a big difference when comparing his films to Straub's ascetic visual conception. By deconstructing conventional aesthetics of the cinema he nonetheless never gave up the same aesthetic realm of filmmaking.

Another form of counter-cinema was carried about by Straub, who tended to minimize the variations of visual stimuli in his films and to achieve the most severe austerity possible to orient the viewer's entire attention to the almost continuous flow of the audible text. The style of Straub's mise-en-scène distantly suggests Bresson in that his scenes are relatively short, concentrating only on the main verbal event that represents the conceptual essence of the scene while the characters' acting is dispassionate and inexpressive, consisting mostly of reduced act signals rather that real acts.

20. Godard, *Introduction a une véritable historire du cinéma*, 258.

However, paradoxically, Straub does not follow Bresson where Bresson's minimalism becomes visually exciting and imaginative. Straub's camera work is not metonymic; it does not conceal visual information, which in the films of Bresson opens up a metaphysical dimension. Straub's camera is not evocative, it reveals everything that belongs to the given scene, it is mostly frontal and highly static. This style is absolutely congruent with Straub's intentions to suppress aesthetic texture that "stands between him and reality." Even in his *Moses and Aaron* (1974), which is an adaptation of Arnold Schönberg's opera staged in a desert, Straub refuses to add any more interpretative element to the film than the minimum necessary to follow the opera.

The Film as a Means of Direct Political Action

Getting even deeper into political modernism we arrive at the idea that cinema can be for political struggle. Not that this idea was anything new to film history, and we do not even have to go all the way back to Dziga Vertov to find some parallels. It is enough to refer to Nazi or Stalinist filmed propaganda. Still, political modernism was a little different. Again, it is the idea of the auteur that makes all the difference here. While Dziga Vertov, Leni Riefenstahl, or the Soviet socialist realist directors made their films in the name of "the party" or the "nation" or the "proletarian revolution," political activism in modern cinema was intended as an individual auteurial act. It is true that Godard for a short period, in order to support the '68 movement, made some short clips called "cine-flyers" (*ciné-tract*), but obviously this was not in the service of an organized political power; it was rather an individual contribution to a movement based on similar individual initiatives and contributions.

Political activism in France in the cinema began really with a collective film, *Far from Vietnam*, made in 1967 by Godard, Chris Marker, Agnès Varda, Joris Ivens, William Klein, Claude Lelouch, and Alain Resnais. However, one of the auteurs of this film, Chris Marker, was already known for his fervent political engagement especially in his film *Beautiful May* (1963), in which he already made the same turn toward an attitude of personal and political commitment to recorded reality that was to become a trend in cinema after 1966. Not counting *The Little Soldier* (1961), which is a film that skims through a political subject matter (the Algerian war) rather than really treating it (which nevertheless did not prevent French censorship from banning the film), Godard made his first political films in 1966 (*Made in U.S.A.*), followed by more radical and ideological films in 1967: *La Chinoise* and *Week-end*. René Prédal notes that in fact Godard was the only French filmmaker to have any

Fig. 67. *Made in U.S.A.* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1966).

premonition about 1968 and that critics were even mocking Godard's representation of the political atmosphere:

> [The critics] smiled with condescension about the confused anarchism of *La Chinoise*, wondering where poor Godard could possibly find people in real life like the ones he put in his film. A few months later the twin brothers of his characters started the events of May and on the same locations.[21]

From 1968 until 1972, Godard made different films of straight ideological propaganda together with Jean-Pierre Gorin also under the label of the "Dziga Vertov Group." The best known of these films is *All's Well* (1972), which is the only film made in a somewhat traditional environment and form. Godard's militancy shifts direction after 1973 as he becomes more and more interested in new electronic media; however, political issues do not disappear from his cinema until 1979 where the third period of his career began. *Number Two* (1975), *Here and Some Place Else* (1970–1976), and *How Is It Going?* (1975) are reflections on certain political issues through the question of how is it possible to communicate social and political problems with the help of the media. These films already fit more in the category of "direct auteurial discourses" rather than in that of direct political activism.

Godard was of course the most radical representative of political activism and the only one who never left the domain of cinematic modernism

21. Prédal, *50 années de cinéma français*, 292.

with his political films. He went on this way until he found the way to the "new world."

Political activism however was present in many other sectors of the cinema in this period. Following 1968 a number of collective groups were formed in France with the goal of making films to directly affect social reality. Apart from the Dziga Vertov group, there was the Medvedkine group gathered around Chris Marker, whose idea was to have the workers make their own films about their own problems very much like Jean Rouch's cinéma vérité; there were local militant film groups like Ciné-oc in Occitanie or the Unité de production cinéma Bretagne in Brittany; and there were other collective production groups focusing on specific issues. These groups and their films certainly show to what extent an important social and political earthquake can revitalize cinematic production even in the most peripheral sectors, even if their impact was minimal at most on a national scale.

More spectacular was the impact of politics in the other end of the spectrum, in the traditional feature film sector. Costa-Gavras made three films in a row of direct political inspiration, *Z* (1969), *The Confession* (1970), and *State of Siege* (1972). These were not only films with a political subject matter, but they were also made to convey quite unequivocal political messages. Not only was the political message meant to be clear, but Costa-Gavras wanted it to be delivered to the widest audience possible, so he avoided all modernism in the form that could provoke ambiguity. Any ambiguity about the relation between reality and imagination, past and present, narrative and subjective reflection, or any question about the veracity of narration, any kind of abstract representation of the space or the characters, would have weakened the political message. Thus, Costa-Gavras created the subgenre of political action movie that became quite popular during the 1970s especially in Italy, France, Poland, and Hungary, but also in Hollywood.

Truffaut had a good point in criticizing this kind of political activism:

> The idea to have something to say in the cinema is a little dubious, because the playful aspect of it always becomes dominant. Costa-Gavras in his *State of Siege* shows the reality of South America, what kidnapping of diplomats and the revolutionary movement is like. . . . But in actual fact, we enjoy this in the same way we enjoy an action movie.[22]

In other words, what makes the political message of this kind of film effective is not the convincing potential and the truthfulness of the message

22. *Jeune Cinéma* 77 (March 1974).

itself, but the film's entertaining neutral form, which could make any sort of political message look equally convincing. This is why Philippe Maarek called the series of political adventure films the "banalization" of political cinema. His argumentation is very close to Truffaut's:

> It appeared very quickly that the average spectator did not really see in Yves Montand, for example, the symbol of the victims of the communist countries in *The Confession*, or the embodiment of American imperialism in Latin America in *State of Siege*, they considered him rather as their usual film star in his new adventure movie. What is more, metaphorical transposition of the political attack into a foreign country, constraint by the film's financial system often led to attenuating the power of the political attack, since the audience did not make the necessary intellectual effort to associate the story with their own country.[23]

But here lies also the paradox of political modernism. Either the auteurial discourses remain within the self-reflexive, abstract, and subjective modernist paradigm, but then the message remains either ambiguous (Godard) or overgeneralized (Straub and Huillet), or the message is unequivocal, but then it loses its convincing potential as an auteurial discourse and becomes either a good action movie, melodrama, or a bad propaganda film. The same paradox was the source of the conflict between the Soviet avant-garde and the Communist Party in the 1930s.

Parabolic Discourse

One variant of the counter-cinema trend was geared to finding ways to create symbolic forms for auteurial ideological discourse rather than trying to eliminate the aesthetic texture of the cinema. These films were not meant to interfere with daily issues of politics; they rather treated general ideological questions like capitalism, revolution, bourgeois society, alienation, and consumerism. Films by Buñuel, Pasolini, Ferreri, Jancsó, Angelopoulos, and Makavejev in this period are the major examples of this trend. The ideological orientation of these films was undeniable, but precisely because of the parabolic form the meaning of the auteurial discourse was not as aggressive as in the political activist variant, and could be sometimes quite enigmatic.

Stylistically, parabolic forms were quite different. Buñuel and Ferreri developed their parables within the classical narrative mode in a classical

23. Philippe Maarek, *De mai 68, aux films x* (Paris: Dujarric, 1979), 93.

realist style. The only way they diverted their films from ordinary narrative conventions was to insert surrealistic, absurd, or anachronistic elements in them. Jancsó and Angelopoulos followed a symbolized and radicalized variant of the Antonioni long-take style. The closest connection one could find to Makavejev's fragmented, rather harsh, provocative collage style in *Sweet Movie* is Godard's *Week-end,* however, the film's satirical tone is very Central European.

From the point of view of cinematic composition and the ideology expressed by this composition, Pasolini's two films belonging to this trend are by far the most intriguing. *Teorema* (1968) was conceived originally as a theater play, written in verse, and Pasolini was entirely conscious about the double nature of his project: "[S]incerely, I cannot tell which side prevails in the film: the literary or the cinematic."[24] The title itself warns the viewer that this film should not be interpreted just as a work of art but first of all as a theoretical statement or as a consistent philosophical elaboration "written" with the camera and using arguments articulated in the form of moving images. Pasolini's film is much less "subversive" or radical than those of Godard and Straub of this period inasmuch as he does not follow the program of "terrorizing" the aesthetic form. That does not make his film any less theoretical, not to mention difficult to comprehend, but there is a clear and continuous willingness in Pasolini to "make art" rather than eliminate it. In fact, *Teorema* is one of the most puzzling and imaginative works of political modernism.

The reason for Pasolini's "moderate" radicalism probably can be explained by his theoretical ideas about what he calls "poetic cinema."[25] Pasolini did not conceive of conceptual discourse and artistic visual style of the film as opposing categories. In other words, for Pasolini to achieve direct ideological self-expression it did not seem necessary to go against "artistic" composition in his films. He claimed that cinematic form is capable of expressing any kind of conceptual thinking by the means of the "free indirect style," the indirect manifestation of auteurial discourse. Any poetic element of the film can be put into the "indirect style" whereby all highly abstract thoughts can be articulated in any poetic form. *Teorema* can be regarded as the most elaborate realization of his idea of "poetic cinema," where a conceptual discourse is articulated mainly by images rather than words.

24. Cited in Hervé Joubert-Laurencin, *Pasolini: Portrait du poète en cineaste* ([Paris]: Éd. Cahiers du cinéma, 1995), 188.

25. For Pasolini's theoretical works, see Pasolini, *Empirismo eretico* (Milan: Garzanti, 1972).

Teorema

The difficulty in making sense of the most radical works of political modernism resides in their analytical form. These films are analytical not only in the obvious sense that they analyze social and ideological problems but also in the sense that their formal radicalism affects first of all the coherence of the aesthetic form. This means suppression of redundancy of the various semantic channels of the form: visual and acoustic elements, dialogue and narrative, and elements of visual style. One semantic level does not support the meaning of another one; these levels function rather as separate channels of information that can enter into different relationships with one another. In Godard's and Straub's films of this period analytical method was accompanied by a certain reductionism also involving almost total elimination of certain meaningful levels, most typically that of a coherent narrative structure regarded as the main barrier between the auteur and the auteur's ideological discourse. In this respect Pasolini's approach to cinematic form was just the opposite of Straub's or Godard's. His idea of indirect discourse could incorporate any kind of aesthetic element as capable of delivering the auteur's ideological discourse. No matter how "artistic" these elements are, Pasolini claimed that "free indirect style" saturates them with the required ideological meaning. Thus Pasolini did not have to give up the pictorial style characteristic of all his earlier films, provided that pictorial allusions created an autonomous semantic level.

The novelty of Pasolini's method in this film as compared to his earlier works was the systematic variation of the visual and acoustic "parameters" and motives of his images. He separated the various semantic levels from one another but did not suppress any possible channels of information. The channel he reduced the most was just the one other political modernists relied upon the most: the verbal channel. Unlike the films of Godard, Straub, Duras, or Bertolucci of this period, *Teorema*'s theoretical discourse was carried out with the help of often symbolic and independent visual and acoustic elements rather than words. There is a regular alteration of monochrome and color images and of handheld and fixed camera movements, and there is a constant return of some symbolic visual elements like the image of the desert or the factory in the film. He uses a variety of different relationships between image and sound, almost as if the soundtrack of the film was entirely independent of the images. We have scenes in which we see the characters speak, but we can hear only music; there are scenes with nondiegetic music, and when the scene changes, the same music continues on regardless of the change of the subject in the image. Different styles of musical

elements alter rapidly in the film, creating a puzzling system of musical accompaniment.[26] Musical background in the film almost always thwarts the viewer's expectation. We would hardly expect dramatic contemporary musical accompaniment for a scene in which a bunch of students cheerfully fools around on the street. Or when the two young men go to sleep in the same room and turn off the light, we can hear very loud rock-and-roll music; and the viewer is also puzzled by smooth jazz tunes during the scene where Emilia is buried alive by her mother. The reduction of redundancy of signifying elements creates a structure where these elements can be associated with each other only on an abstract conceptual level, and in the meantime the narrative itself, which is normally supposed to control these elements, becomes also only one element or image among others.

This results in the certain symbolism or parabolic character of *Teorema*. This is especially obvious regarding the three main motives of the film. The first is the central character, whose biblical references are obvious. A telegram announces the "good news" about the visit of a young man to a grand bourgeois family. We will not learn anything more about the young man. After he arrives every member of the family, male and female, unable to resist their wild sexual attraction, falls in love with him. After having sex with all the members of the family, making them happy, he suddenly receives word that he must leave. His disappearance leaves the family in total despair.

The biblical allusion in this has been so obvious that even the overtly corporal interpretation of the divine visitation as well as its sexual character, which is the second important symbolic element, was not problematic even for the Roman Catholic Church. On the contrary, apparently, Pasolini himself asked a Catholic priest, Father Lucio Settimio Caruso of the Pro Civitate Christiana, to find him a biblical citation to illustrate his "teorema" about the "sudden embodiment or eruption of God in earthly affairs." Here is what the priest found for Pasolini: "You have seduced me, my Lord, and I have let myself being seduced" (Jeremiah 20:7).[27] From the film it is clear that Pasolini felt confirmed in the erotic interpretation of the divine contact.[28] The third symbolic motive is the recurring image of the desert, which slightly shifts its meaning each time it appears. The image of the desert is

26. The effect of rapidly varying musical styles was applied for the first time in the credit sequence in Antonioni's *Eclipse*. He did not use this device in the film until that point.

27. Joubert-Laurencin, *Pasolini*, 195.

28. Pasolini calls it the mixing of the idea of incest and the divine. Jean-André Fieschi, "Entrietien: Pier Paolo Pasolini ('Edipo Rè'), *Cahiers du cinéma* 195 (November 1967): 13.

metaphorically associated with other motives of the film, such as the factory, the father, and the sexual adventures of the mother after the visitor disappears. In the last scene the father walks naked in the desert uttering a desperate cry. Other than symbolizing the total desolation of the father's life, the image of the desert becomes saturated here with another biblical allusion. It is Moses' wondering in the desert, in a no-man's-land between the vale of tears and Canaan.

Teorema is impossible to understand without the symbolic aspect of these motives and in this symbolism resides the parabolic character of the whole story. However, here the parable refers to a particular ideological construction rather than to a preexisting story or segment of reality. The narrative itself articulates an individual philosophical statement that is not an artistic interpretation or vision of reality; it is a rather peculiar combination and association of different concepts that circumscribe Pasolini's ideological stance regarding the actual state of bourgeois society. Human alienation in capitalist bourgeois societies cannot be solved by a change in property relations (the father gives his factory to his workers, who are skeptical that this will make any difference), only by the radical decomposition of the bourgeois individual down to her basic emotional and instinctual life (which means accepting sexuality, regardless of gender, as another form of communication). In this way she becomes vulnerable and open to communication and salvation from another person. Thus, the only way that can lead out of the alienated situation of the bourgeois individual is through the total loss of every fundamental link (family, sex, art, property) that relates the individual to the bourgeois world and to the desires preconditioned by it. In this sense, salvation is a desperate search for a new self (walking naked in the desert).

In theoretical terms Pasolini's film is a peculiar and unique combination of elements of new left Marxism, Christian salvation theory, and sexual, especially gay, politics. The coherence of Pasolini's theorem however is not supported by any consistent philosophy or ideology. It is an independent ideology supported by a highly symbolic story, which is in turn made intelligible only through this unique ideology, and this is what could be called a *myth*.

In his next political modernist film, *Porcile* (1969), he goes further in disrupting the coherence of the narrative. The film's interesting narrative device is that it contains two plot lines, which never meet and have nothing to do with each another, as though *Porcile* contained two separate films in one. One story is about a grand bourgeois family where the son has the strange addiction of visiting the pigs, until one day the pigs devour him. This story

line is also divided in two, as the discussions about sex and politics between the son and his girlfriend are completely separate from the discussion between the father and his business partner, both of whom we learn had business dealings with Nazi concentration camps during the war. If this part of the film is built up on dialogue, in the other story there is no dialogue at all. All we see are some barbarian cannibals wandering around in the desert (as in *Teorema*) killing and eating each other. If in *Teorema* the thesis and parabolic demonstration was united in one story, here one relates metaphorically to the other.

Parabolic structure was the most convenient form also for filmmakers who were otherwise attached to conventional narration. As mentioned, this is the case for Marco Ferreri and Luis Buñuel, whose stories in this period are always highly parabolic and put forward some well-articulated philosophical or historical theses but most of the time do not exceed the limits of conventional time-space continuity of narration. This was also the case of some Hungarian and Polish films in the early 1970s.

It seems that the discursive conception of the film form in political modernism either led to radical suppression of all space-time unity of the narrative or, whenever some kind of classical narrative coherence was maintained, it necessarily led to symbolism. No wonder that Straub in particular mentioned symbolism as the intended target of his "terrorism." He and Godard were the main representatives of antinarrative, reductionist, political modernism, while Pasolini, Jancsó, Angelopoulos, and Makavejev were representatives of a symbolic or parabolic political modernism. Neither of the two trends built their films on realistic time-space relationships. While the reductionist version suppressed virtually all kinds of coherent universes behind the ideological discourse (which is why they had to rely on written or verbal texts), the symbolist version created a parabolic or mythical universe to convey the ideological message (which is why many of them could eliminate verbal manifestations to a considerable degree).

This leads us to the next, slightly overlapping, portion of the auteurial discourse category within political modernism: the creation of self-contained ideological or mythical universes.

The Auteur's Private Mythology

In a way all parables refer to an independent universe as it is the nature of parables to apply general rules to a segment of the world and provide an interpretation of the world with the help of these rules. The ideological orientation of political modernism was favorable to the creation of parables with

more or less direct political content. However, we find a peculiar modern phenomenon in this period, which was in many ways contrary to what had been accepted until then as belonging to mainstream modernism. This is what we may call the mythological interpretation of reality.

In one way or another "reality" as a problem has always been the focus of modern cinema. Unlike neorealism, where the objective status of reality was not problematized, modernism's "reality" was always conceived of as a mental entity rather than a social one, where mental character would mean anything from a simple filter of auteurial commentaries, deep philosophical problems as the subject matter of the film, to the imaginary universe of memories, visions, dreams, or nightmares. Narrative fiction and theatrical artifice were accepted in the modernism of the early sixties only as reflections of an auteur's state of mind, like in *Last Year at Marienbad* or in *8 1/2*. Therefore, nobody considered, for example, Marcel Camus's *Black Orpheus* (1959) as part of the French new wave, and Godard, comparing this film to Jean Rouch's cinéma vérité in an article titled "Brazil as viewed from Billancourt," Billancourt being the biggest French film studio at the time, rejected it with contempt: "Next to *I, a Negro*, *Black Orpheus* looks totally inauthentic."[29] Traditional mythology as a set of narrative conventions was regarded as contrary to the auteurial approach to mental reality. It was seen as another way of concealing the auteur's personality behind a colorful world of fairy tales. This attitude changed considerably from the mid-1960s on. Traditional mythologies became the basis for the narrative and the visual style of several films, such as Pasolini's *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (1964), Sergei Paradzhanov's *Shadow of Forgotten Ancestors* (1966), *The Color of Pomegranates* (1968), and Frantisek Vlacil's *Marketa Lazarová* (1966). "Reality" in these films could not be in any way interpreted as an auteur's point of view. The imaginary universe represented in these stories was that of a collective mental tradition rather than a subjective approach to some kind of experience of reality. Pasolini, for example, claimed to have made a faithful adaptation of the written text of Matthew's gospel rather than his own "auteurial" vision of it, and this claim was justified by some in the church, too.[30]

29. Jean-Luc Godard, "Brazil as Viewed from Billancourt," *Cahiers du cinéma* 97 (July 1959): 59.

30. Cardinal Giovanni Urbani, after having seen the film at the Mostra di Venezia in 1964, first thought that Pasolini had not understood the Bible: "Gesú non era così" (Jesus was not like this), he said. But then he went home and reread Matthew's Gospel, and he changed his mind: "I realized that Pasolini, although a layman, had brought Matthew's Jesus to the screen with word-for-word fidelity." Cited in Italo Moscati, *Pasolini e il teorema*

After 1966, using folkloric or mythological material in a film's visual style of narrative became one of the main trends in modern cinema. After *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew,* Pasolini made two films based on ancient mythology: *Oedipus Rex* (1967) and *Medea* (1969), and in a certain way *Teorema* can be also considered as a film of mythological inspiration in which different elements of mythology and cultural tradition mixed in a unique manner.[31] After a relatively long pause, Fellini's next long feature film was based on Petronius's *Satyricon,* which inaugurated a series of films based on different mythological, folkloric, or traditional literary materials: *Fellini's Roma* (1972), *Amarcord* (1973), and *Fellini's Casanova* (1976). Tarkovsky came out in 1972 with *Solaris,* a film that was a break from his previous films, first of all in that its story took place in a totally fictitious universe of the future, even as the environment was essentially constructed of cultural and mythological reminiscences.[32] And he was already preparing his next work, *Mirror* (1974), a film completely composed of fragments of collective historical and cultural memory.

One important aspect of the stylistic renewal of Hungarian cinema in the early 1970s was mythical construction. Some of Miklós Jancsó's films of the early and mid-1970s also used mythological themes for his abstract parables: *Attila* (1971), *Rome Wants Another Caesar* (1973), *Elektra, My Love* (1974). One of Andrzej Wajda's greatest modernist works was a highly visionary adaptation of Stanislaw Wyspianski's symbolic verse play *The Wedding* (1973), full of folkloric elements providing a mythicizing interpretation of Polish history. Has's *The Hour-Glass Sanatorium* (1973) could be regarded as a parallel film, staging a surrealistic journey back to a onetime existing Polish middle-class Jewish world of the beginning of the century. Zoltán Huszárik's first feature film, *Sinbad* (1971) was a poetic reconstruction of the Sinbad archetype, and István Szabó also tried his hand in this trend with two films, elegiac reconstructions of a world disappearing in the bloody storm of the Second World War (*25 Fireman's Street*, 1973; and *Budapest Tales*, 1976). Werner Herzog made his first mythological film in 1972, *Augirre: The Wrath of God,* to be followed by other films focusing on mythical characters or cultural archetypes, like nineteenth-century Kaspar Hauser in *Every Man for Himself and God Against All* (1974) and Nosferatu in *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (1979), but above all *Heart of*

del sesso (Milan: Il saggiatore, 1995), 47.

31. Pasolini had the idea of *Oedipus* already at the time of *L'Accattone!* in 1960. When in 1966 Pasolini started to write the treatment for *Teorema,* suddenly the idea of *Oedipus* began to take shape around the similar incest motive, and he decided to make *Oedipus* first.

32. This was part of the reason why the writer of the novel *Solaris,* Stanislav Lem, did not recognized the film as an authentic adaptation.

Glass (1976). Stylistically Herzog's mythological films belong in many ways to the postmodern era. Especially after *Heart of Glass* his narrative style became rather classical, and only the mythical or mystical topic suggests the modernist trend Herzog started with.

Creating private mythologies inspired a number of other auteurs whose previous works had not pointed in this direction: Carlos Saura's films of this period, especially *The Garden of Delights* (1970), *Anna and the Wolves* (1973), and *Cria!* (1976), Víctor Erice's *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973), and the films of Daniel Schmid, especially *Tonight or Never* (1972) and *La paloma* (1974). In France a whole group of off-mainstream filmmakers initiated a trend of highly personal, poetic, or mythical films.[33] The best-known personality was Philippe Garrel, whose early films marked a remarkable attempt to renew post-new wave French cinema with the help of an esoteric, mythological approach: *Marie for Memory* (1967), *Le lit de la vierge* (1969), and *The Inner Scar* (1972).

It is interesting to see that the period of political modernism consisted of seemingly contradictory trends. One of them was an austere, didactic, counter-cinema movement, the other, a spectacular, markedly fictitious, and poetic movement. Between the two we find the highly stylized parabolic films of early-1970s Jancsó (*Winter Wind*, 1969, *Red Psalm*, 1972, *La Pacifista*, 1970) or those of Ferreri (especially *Don't Touch the White Woman!* 1974 or *Liza*, 1972). All three trends emerged out of the need to replace the banality of everyday reality experience with a conceptual image of reality either in the form of a political ideology or of a folkloric or ancient mythological topic considered as archetypal ingredients or models of contemporary life. All three trends created a comprehensive ideological framework to describe reality, whether this framework was constructed of elements of a traditional mythology, a metaphor, or conceptual associations. These ideological frameworks represented the auteur's totalizing vision about the world, which had very little to do with empirical reality. However, they were meant to represent the essential rules, laws, functions, and forms organizing empirical reality. They were a sort of mythical reconstruction of reality.

The reason why I use the term *mythical* here is that these models were always built on historical stories. Unfolding an ideological image through stories about how things are organized in the world and creating imaginary emblems of this arrangement—this is basically what myths do. The overwhelming majority of these films was simply using historical or cultural myths, and the rest used different mythical archetypes (traditional imagi-

33. They grouped themslves around Zanzibar Productions.

nary emblems) to provide clues to interpreting contemporary reality. Even in Godard's case, where the use of term "mythical" seems to be probably the less justified of all, one can detect an attempt to reconstruct historical reality on the basis of different fragments of images that are meant to epitomize a whole imaginary context, whether it be the history of the Palestinian cause (*Here and Elsewhere*) or the situation in Portugal (*How Is It Going?*). In both films the main topic is the problem how to make political and historical situations imaginable with the help of the media, that is, how to make a story from a given image (hence the title of the latter film, *How Is It Going?*).

The Self-Critique of Political Modernism: *Sweet Movie*

Yugoslav director Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* (1974) is a kind of synthesis of different forms of political modernism and at the same time an ironical reflection on it. By its reflexive and self-critical character, *Sweet Movie* steps beyond the limits set by political modernism.

The film can be best described as a satirical parable of the relation between media and political movements. *Sweet Movie* uses direct auteurial discourse to critique both the Americanized entertainment industry and leftist political counterculture for leaving practically no room for serious political opposition to consumer mass culture. Makavejev's argument is that both consumer culture and its radical revolutionary critique use the same methods of erotic seduction and infantilization to reduce the individual to an erotic object of consumer way of life on the one hand and to an all-embracing dictatorial community on the other. The role of the media in both cases is to make the given ideology even more attractive and to eroticize and sweeten its subject matter even more, no matter on which side it is on, making all attempts for a political critique by the cinema illusory.

Because of its highly provocative, even shocking and highly fragmented form, Makavejev's film is indebted the most to Godard's *Week-end.* He uses a loose narrative framework of a picaresque form, just like Godard, to lead his character through various adventures; however, his narrative frame is so fragmented that hardly any consistent plot can be found in it. The two plot lines, for example, the one taking place in Amsterdam and the girl's itinerary from the United States to Paris, never meet. The two can be considered as two parallel discourses in Pasolini's *Porcile.*

What distinguishes Makavejev's film within political modernism is that he does not pretend that his film is exempt from his own political critique. Godard still emphasized in *Week-end* the special status of his film. By calling his own film "lost in the Universe," or "found in the trash can," or making

Figs. 68–69. Movies and erotic seduction: *Sweet Movie* (Dusan Makavejev, 1974).

his characters say, "How did I get into this film?" Godard claims an outsider's position that was inoculated from his critique of bourgeois culture. It is precisely by the provocation that he distances his film as criticism from the object of this criticism. Godard continues to maintain this claim even more radically in his later films by suppressing the conventional "attractive" aesthetic texture, just like Straub and Huillet in their own protest films. Makavejev's provocation is of a different nature. Instead of withholding the aesthetic attractiveness of his film, he stuffs it with the most vulgar, excessive, even disgusting, motives of sensuality, which political modernist countercinema attacked and tried to avoid. By contrast, Makavejev shocked the audience by saturating his film with images of intensified sensual pleasures that in a moderate form are meant to be seductive in the cinema, but here is represented as murderous obscenity. Doing this, Makavejev makes his film part of the same obscene media business that abuses human beings for the sake of eroticized seduction, whether with the goal of promoting consumer culture or critiquing it. The last sequence of the film, in which the girl masturbates in the pool full of chocolate and filmed by a cameraman perversely enjoying the scene, is a direct manifestation of this self-critique.

Obviously, this difference was in part due to the eight-year time span between the two films, during which representation of explicit sexuality had become a common practice in the cinema. More important, however,

it shows the difference in the status of political critique in modern cinema. *Week-end* is a film of the pre-1968 era in which culture (thus art cinema) was taken seriously as a potential refuge against consumerist domination of individual desires. From this point of view, it seemed possible to attack consumer capitalism and its mass entertainment culture. Seven years after the failure of the '68 cultural revolution, and from an essentially Eastern European point of view (with its legacy of totalitarianism) the Marxist critique of capitalism appeared just as destructive as the object of this critique.

Summary

From a stylistic point of view, this period could be divided into two parts. The first part dates from 1967 until around 1971, and the second from 1972 until the end of the decade. The period of the late sixties is predominantly characterized by various forms of modernist radicalism, while the seventies by the slow dissolution of the modernist paradigm. It was a return of the classical paradigm on the one hand, and the slow transition of modernism into postmodernism on the other. Until about 1975, we can still speak about the hegemony of the modernist movement in European art cinema. That will no longer be the case by the end of the decade, when pure modernist forms become extremely rare. In the third period of late modern cinema we can see the dominance of different forms of ornamental and theatrical styles. The minimalist form is represented by Chantal Ackerman and Marguerite Duras alone, but after 1975 the ornamental and theatrical forms are also very scarce. Different forms of naturalism disappeared almost completely, with Hungarian cinema as the exception, but this continuation was for predominantly political reasons.

: 20 :

"The Death of the Auteur"

It is not easy to make a distinction in the 1970s between films belonging to political modernism's mythical trend and those already transcending the modernist paradigm. In this respect, there is a smooth transition, an organic continuity between modern and postmodern. It is easier to see the difference between the two categories through films that are distant in time enough from one another, but political modernism in the mid-1970s was just the transitional period where many elements of the postmodern were already present. This is true especially in some films of new German cinema. Early Fassbinder films (*Gods of Plague*, *Whity*, *Angst Eats the Soul*), for example, emphasized artificiality and pastiche typical of postmodernism, which recurred forcefully only in his last film *Querelle* (1982). Herzog's *Heart of Glass* stands right between the two categories. On the one hand it is a highly unnatural-looking, stylized film with an obscure mythical narrative that takes place for the most part in shady rooms; on the other hand it continuously refers to the greatness of nature as the main source of human mythology and imagination, which by its fundamentally romantic conception somewhat keeps it within the confines of modernism.

If we still wanted to make some distinctions we can resort to two basic principles of modernism. One is homogeneity of style; the other is a fundamentally ontological approach to reality, in other words, a sense of "objective reality." Both are closely related with the central role attributed to the "auteur."

As to the homogeneity of style, modern cinema had two fundamental ways to carry this out. One was some kind of minimalism, whereby homogeneity was the result of a reduced number of basic stylistic elements. This

is the source of the well-known austerity of modernism. The other was the use of a set of decorative elements, but only with reference to a traditional cultural background, which restricts the interpretation of these decorative elements. This is the case of modern ornamentalism. Without this reference, ornamental diversity of stylistic elements loses its conceptual framework and becomes eclectic. One thing we can observe in postmodern cinema is not only the diversification of stylistic elements but also the multiplication of cultural references. Modern ornamental films use only one cultural background (a historical period or a particular national folklore), most of the time transformed by the auteur's own fantasy world; whereas the fantasy world of postmodern films picks different elements from different cultural backgrounds. In modern ornamental films, a traditional cultural background functions as the framework of a single auteurial discourse, it is part of the auteur's narrative. In postmodern cinema auteurial discourse is disconnected from cultural citations, or to be more precise, auteurial discourse itself becomes a cultural citation. The modern auteur appeared either as an abstract narrative position or function (as in the films of the *nouveau roman* directors) or as an existing person (Fellini, Wajda, Tarkovsky, Godard). The postmodern auteur becomes a part played in the narrative. The modern auteur appears as an almighty demiurge while the postmodern auteur dissolves into different roles. The best example of the postmodern auteur in the cinema is Nanni Moretti, who, unlike Fellini, his modernist ancestor, becomes the central character of his own films. He is not providing only his personal vision about different elements of the world, remaining in the background as the mastermind of the world; he appears in different auteurial roles in his films, each of which represents a different auteurial discourse.

A similar shift characterizes the difference between Godard's political modernist and postmodernist period. The most spectacular change in Godard's style in 1979 was that he returned to a relatively conventional narrative form. But this was made possible by the fact that he gave up his all-embracing and unifying narrative position and became a part of his own narration as a person or role, just like in *First Name: Carmen*, where he plays himself in the film. Godard reminds the viewer in *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* of the French proverb that the "style is the man himself"; but then eclecticism of style is a direct consequence of the dissolution of the central auteurial position in postmodernism. When the collagelike character started to prevail in Godard films, basically starting from *Two or Three Things*, the auteur as the central organizing power of the collage also came to the foreground. The more collage became important in Godard's style, the more he

placed himself at the center. From 1979 on, the dominance of collage style remained an important feature of Godard's films, but the "auteur" became only one element of the collage. In this respect, it is interesting to compare *Alphaville* (1965) and *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* (1990). Both films refer to the same commercial film series of the 1950s, the adventures of special agent Lemmy Caution. While *Alphaville* is a coherent pastiche of the genre, a Godardian utopia of industrial civilization viewed through the decline of the myth of the gangster movies, the story of Lemmy Caution in *Germany Year 90 Nine Zero* (1990) is only one element in the rich collection of very different references to history and history of the cinema.

Fellini's films of the late 1970s reflect also the idea of the disappearance of the modern auteur. *Orchestra Rehearsal* (1978) has always been interpreted as a political parable about the falling apart of liberal democracy, inspired by the actual unstable political situation in Italy in the mid-1970s. However, in spite of the obvious allusions to political parties and trade unions, the central theme of the parable was artistic creation in a situation where the central auteurial will could not prevail. A conductor, unlike a head of government, has to enforce his own unique auteurial vision on the musicians, which becomes impossible at a certain point if he is too loyal to the various interests of each of the members of the orchestra. (Whereas the "art of politics" is to establish equilibrium between the different social interests rather than enforcing a specific point of view.) According to the parable of *Orchestra Rehearsal*, the authority of a central point of view is lost, which is more like a reflection of the situation in the end of modernism. That Fellini was more concerned about the role of the auteur than about Italian politics is evident by his previous film in this period, *Fellini's Casanova* (1976). In this film Fellini already abandoned the folkloric (*Amarcord*) and mythological (*Satyricon*, *Fellini's Roma*) backgrounds to return to a more theatrical stylization. However, what he emphasized from Casanova's story was the impossibility of creating a unified auteurial discourse. The tragedy of Casanova, according to the film, was that he always wanted to be accepted as a serious artist and philosopher, and he was appreciated only for his less intellectual, more earthly, and spectacular capacities. Casanova could not make his *own* discourse prevail and had to act according to roles others cast upon him. This idea is reinforced in Fellini's next seemingly political parable, *And the Ship Sails On* (1983), which is clearly about the end of an aristocratic cultural paradigm too much concerned with itself and excluding exterior reality.

The idea of the "death of the auteur" appears in very concrete forms in two films of Wim Wenders in the early 1980s: *Lightning over Water* (1980) and *The*

Fig. 70. An auteur: *Fellini's Casanova* (Federico Fellini, 1976).

State of Things (1982). The first film is a semidocumentary about the death of one of Wenders's idols, auteur Nicholas Ray; the other is a parable about the end of the auteur film, ending also with the death of the "European auteur filmmaker." However, all these films came only after the postmodern idea about the disappearance of the central auteurial position became a commonplace in literary theory and philosophy. But most important, they came after Tarkovsky's *Mirror,* which was the first and most powerful expression

of the crisis of the central auteurial position, and which was the first to signal powerfully the end of modernism in the cinema.

The Last of Modernism: *Mirror*

The most remarkable vision of the modern auteur on the verge of dissolution in film history can be found in Tarkovsky. It appears that his auteurial crisis, of which *Andrei Rublev* was the first manifestation, was by far the deepest concern his films dealt with throughout in his career. Four of his seven feature films were dedicated in one way or another to the crisis of the auteur. Tarkovsky was planning *Mirror* long before he was actually able to make it. *Mirror* would have been a logical continuation of *Andrei Rublev* and Tarkovsky's analysis of the auteur's place in the world. He was ready to make it only seven years later, by which time it became not only a self-reflective vision about an auteur's inner struggle for making sense of the cultural heritage he must revitalize, but it became also the reflection of the general crisis of the central narrative position of the auteur.

The film is composed of images of different fragments of personal, historical, and cultural memory. The organizing principle of this mosaic is the auteur's personal biography where all these different elements met, but the question the film poses is how to know whether these fragments can be connected to form a consistent and continuous history that can be continued. The film presents a situation where the crisis of the auteur does not stem from the relationship between auteur and reality as in *Andrei Rublev*, a crisis that could be resolved by finding the appropriate attitude vis-à-vis reality, but forms a certain lack of consistency *within* the auteur himself. The unified auteurial position in *Andrei Rublev* becomes a fragmented position in *Mirror,* and the auteur is identified with that same fragmentation; this is shown visually by the fact that we don't see the auteur in the film, only various past memories about himself. On the level of narrative present, we see only parts of him (his hand), but not a person in his physical entirety. If the special place of *8 1/2* in the beginning of modern film history was that it offered an image of the auteur who could make himself a consistent narrator by having "nothing to say but his own inner disorder," the special place of *Mirror* at the end of this same history was precisely marked by the fact it is the one that questions the most directly the consistency of the modernist auteurial position. The difference between *Mirror* and other films of the period dealing with the powerlessness of the auteur faced with the fragmentation of reality, save Godard's *Number Two* (1975), is precisely the fact that

Fig. 71. Personal myth: *Mirror* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1974).

Tarkovsky represents this crisis as one of the auteur rather than a crisis of the world.

What we said about the relationship between the dissolution of the auteur's central position and stylistic eclecticism applies to Tarkovsky too. In his later films the dissolution of the central position of the auteur is even more emphasized, which causes an increased eclecticism in his style. In *Nostalghia* (1983) we find already an auteur in a clearly schizoid situation split between past and present, between his memories and his desires. Also the film is clearly eclectic by constantly mixing traditional Russian cultural motives with motives of Italian renaissance and baroque. Tarkovsky's last film, *Sacrifice* (1986), brings even further the theme of the auteur's schizophrenia, and consequently, his style becomes even more eclectic, this time mixing various and very distant cultural motives from Europe and Asia, from Christian and pagan traditions in a film that also mixes reminiscences of the Bergman films of the late 1960s (closed-situation dramas focusing on emotional emptiness of the characters, situated on a deserted island, the presence of the threat of atomic war, obsolete objects reminiscent of the early 1970s, and of course, the acting of Erland Josephson together with the cinematography of Sven Nykvist), with those of the Tarkovsky films (the character of the holy fool, strong and enigmatic female characters, the repetition of *Mirror*'s surrealistic vision of sexual intercourse, and allusions to the transcendental character of nature). Tarkovsky remained a fundamentally modernist auteur who could only take the idea of the disappearance of the auteur as the central narrative focus if he represented that state of mind as an illness or an aberration. He could not conceive of himself as assuming different roles and having different discourses. He had only one role and one discourse: one that associated him with the revitalization of the spiritual tradition of Russian culture.

The other aspect of *Mirror*'s special position in modern cinema concerns its narrative composition.

Mirror and Serial Structure

Tarkovsky uses a compositional logic in this film, which is found usually in structuralist avant-garde films and appears very rarely even in modern art cinema: serial composition.

Mirror encompasses a variety of different forms of the mental journey genre that had developed since its appearance in 1959. The mental journey in this film can be considered as a psychoanalytic process aimed at finding a past trauma like in *Hiroshima, My Love* or *Muriel*. This process is associated with an artist's psychological crisis like in *8 1/2*. The imagining subject's narrative is also considered as a means of hypnosis just like in *Last Year at Marienbad* (that film's first sequence, in which a psychiatrist hypnotizes a boy suffering from a speech defect, is a direct allusion to this). Many of the imaginary sequences of the film are ambiguous as it is not clear whose memories they represent. In fact, most of the scenes taking place in the 1930s are to a great extent the product of the auteur's fantasy,[1] thus past becomes an imaginary past affecting present just like in *Last Year at Marienbad*. The film's narrative situation is similar to that of Robbe-Grillet's *The Immortal* (a man in a room imagining scenes of his life), and just like in *The Immortal*, there are sequences that cannot be fitted into the narrative situation. These sequences are extradiegetic and reflexive commentaries on the processes of memory and association. But this process is presented as a film since the "auteur" of the memories and imaginary scenes is stated to be the maker of the film *Mirror* in the sequence where we are in the narrator's place, the camera slowly dollying through different rooms approaching a big poster advertising one of his earlier films, *Andrei Rublev*. Thus, *Mirror* is not only reflected upon as a Tarkovsky film, but also as a film to be compared with *Andrei Rublev*, which is also a story about an artist's psychological crisis. In addition to increasing the reflexive nature of *Mirror*, this commentary retroactively reinforces the self-portrait character of *Andrei Rublev* too. This entire complicated reflexive system is referred to in the title, *Mirror*, which itself evokes the idea of reflection. The broadest possible interpretative scheme of *Mirror* could be, just like in *Last Year at Marienbad* or *The Immortal*, that the film's narration itself is the substance or the medium of the free associations; the film is

1. The origin of many such scenes is the existing family photographs, but the stories built around these photos are in most cases imaginary.

the "brain" where the images are originated; or the film is a reflection of Tarkovsky's mind.

But just because Tarkovsky's problem in the film is how to make a coherent whole out of divergent fragments of memories and imagination, the mental journey through layers of the past and memory dissolves into parallel narratives told from different points of view. And that creates an important difference compared to the early *nouveau roman* type of mental journey films. There is a narrative point of view in the film of the auteur, of his son, and of her mother. The different events taking place in the film are told alternatively from these points of view, and the points of view are not dissolved into each other; rather, they remain distinct. In spite of the narrative frame (the auteur lying sick in his bed evokes memories of his past) the film consists of multiple parallel narratives rather than of only one.

There is one film of the *nouveau roman* tradition whose narrative structure is very similar and thus can be compared to *Mirror.* This film is Robbe-Grillet's *Eden and After,* made in 1971. Even if *Mirror* was finished three years after Robbe-Grillet's film, the birth of the idea of the two films idea is virtually contemporary. Tarkovsky had a fairly clear idea about *Mirror* by 1970 and the first draft was ready just at the time the idea of *Eden and After* was conceived. But Tarkovsky had to finish *Solaris* (1972) first, and had enormous difficulties with getting his next project (under the working title of "*White, White Day*" at the time) approved by cultural authorities. As a result, the film was shot only in 1973 and released in 1974. This is to say that *Mirror* cannot be regarded as a "replica" of *Eden and After;* not to mention the fact that Tarkovsky could not possibly have seen this film at the time in the Soviet Union anyway, and probably never saw it.[2] The simultaneity of the two films is an important fact since it shows that modernist principles of the cinema were already widespread enough internationally to generate similar and yet original solutions simultaneously in different parts of the world without any direct contacts. That had not been the case ten years earlier in the beginning of modern cinema.

Both films mark a considerable shift in modernism replacing contradictory or nonchronological narratives with a serial construction of parallel narratives. Strictly speaking these films do not have a coherent narrative structure, not even a contradictory or ambiguous one, since one can find no coherent story that links the parallel narratives together. The films present

2. In his diary he usually mentioned the films he saw and the auteurs he respected, but there is no mention of Robbe-Grillet or his films. See Andrei Tarkovsky: *Journal, 1970–1986* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1993).

different short events or elements of longer stories, and these story pieces are connected by a circular system of visual and plot motives, whose coherence is created by a serial system of repetition and variation of these motives. And this system itself appears as the essence of a story. In other words, while the *nouveau roman*-based mental travel films at the beginning of the 1960s concentrated on confusing the narrative status of different plot elements and on confusing the logic and chronology of the narrative structure, *Eden and After* and *Mirror,* focusing on the central role of the narrator because its main subject matter is the process of narration itself, tend to question the basic principle of the traditional linear narrative system including all its modernist versions. Instead of causal coherence and chronological order these films tend to build their narratives on *serial repetition* and *variation,* which are principles developed in serial music and applied in structuralist avant-garde cinema of the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. *Mirror*'s distinguished place in this respect is explained by the fact that Tarkovsky applies serial construction in the mental journey genre, while Robbe-Grillet's film is basically a feature-length experimental film.

Tarkovsky's film is a synthesizing work from a stylistic point of view as well, which also puts it on the borderline between stylistic homogeneity and eclecticism. It would be very difficult to define the style of *Mirror* with only one or two characteristic elements since it synthesizes the most radical stylistic and narrative features modern cinema has developed. There are at least three kinds of image textures in the film. One is the texture of the narrative level, another is a documentary texture of the film's exposition, and the third is the old newsreel texture of embedded film citations. The film uses different textures for different kinds of memories and visionary images too. Thus it alternates between monochrome and color sequences according to the emotional value of the evoked memory or vision. As a general rule Tarkovsky prefers long takes and slow camera movements. Some of the most remarkable examples of his long take style can be found precisely in *Mirror.* However, the film consists of more than six hundred shots, which makes for an average shot length of around two minutes, which is far from the average for a typical long shot style. In fact, shot lengths are fairly uneven in *Mirror,* ranging from shots over four minutes long and flashes a couple of seconds in length. Tarkovsky seems to apply radical fragmentation together with radical continuity in his style, just as he juxtaposes surrealist composition (for example, the image of the mother floating in the air) with documentary style footage. Some parts of the film have a straight and linear narrative structure (for example, the visit by the doctor's wife), while others have only an associative logic with no chronological narrative substance in them (for

Figs. 72–74. Memory, fantasy, and vision: *Mirror* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1974).

example, the scene where the child is alone in the apartment and different "spirits" of the place come to haunt him). In some scenes the acting style is quite naturalistic (as in the scene taking place in the press), while in others the acting is dispassionate, even abstract or symbolic (as in the scenes with the grandmother and the children).

Mirror's style is continuous and fragmented; it is realist and artificially theatrical, even ornamental; it is narrative and associative, linear and serial

at the same time. This film is unique in Tarkovsky's oeuvre. He had never before used fragmented collage style in his films and would not again. Although some recurrent motifs can be found in almost all of his films, *Mirror* is the only film built on the serial structure of visual and acoustic motives.

The only thing that makes this film's style reminiscent of other Tarkovsky films is the peculiar handling of time in his long takes. The specificity of Tarkovsky's long takes is that he uses time to evoke the existence of a divine universe through contemplation of beauty, whether natural or man-made. Unlike Antonioni, whose fundamental strategy is to empty out space by isolating humans from the natural background, Tarkovsky's long takes integrate human actors into their environment. But unlike Jancsó, whose reintegration of humans into their surroundings is aimed at creating a homogeneous space articulated by movement patterns, Tarkovsky's space is not homogeneous. Motives of nature and human culture are meant to represent a metaphysical universe existing within the object world the characters move in. He uses contemplation in time to make the viewer feel the presence of this other world. This conception directly follows from the Orthodox Christian conception about icons, according to which the image is not only a depiction of the divine figure, but also a direct presentation of divinity.[3]

In the final analysis this particular way of handling time is what makes *Mirror* a distinguished piece of work of art among all the mental journey genre films as well as among films having some sort of serial composition. The *nouveau roman* conception of the mental journey reduces everything to the dimension of the narrative discourse. Whether or not the narrator is represented in sound or in person in the narrative, and however ambiguous the narrative is, there exists no universe outside the narrative text. Narrator and narration are parts of the same textual world, which is the ultimate source of the paradoxical character of the *nouveau roman* films of Resnais and Robbe-Grillet. In Tarkovsky's appropriation of the genre the mental journey is considered as real travel through mental universes represented in four of his seven films (*Andrei Rublev*, *Solaris*, *Stalker*, *Nostalghia*) by actual physical dislocation. The travel is always aimed at transcending physical reality toward a spiritual universe that is *beyond* the narrative text. *Mirror* can be considered as a story about an attempt of the auteur to transcend the world of his own fragmented narratives toward a unified spiritual world where these fragments become a coherent whole. The duality of *Mirror*'s style mentioned above is due to Tarkovsky's dual vision of the world. One

3. For a detailed discussion of Tarkovsky's long take style, see Kovács and Szilágyi, *Les mondes d'Andreï Tarkovski*.

set of stylistic traits corresponds to the physical dimension, the other corresponds to the spiritual dimension.

Tarkovsky's transcendental approach is in contradiction with the general flatness and one-dimensional reductionist approach of modernism. Transcendental thinking is very rare in modern cinema anyway, but where it exists, it works through an extremely reduced minimalist style, such as in Bresson's or Dreyer's films. The appearance and the success in the 1960s of Tarkovsky's multidimensional approach is a clear signal of the shifting of modernist taste that had handled multidimensional approaches only in the form of irony, self-reflection, or paradox, but not in the form of transcendence. Nothingness is the only metaphysical category modernism accepts, while mystical or divine parallel worlds belong to the universe of postmodern thinking. *Mirror* can be located on the borderline between the realm of modernism and postmodernism. The fact of the explicit reference to an auteur (even though on the verge of dissolution), as well as the fact that the transcendental parallel universe is reflected upon as a traditional cultural heritage rather than as an immediate experience, puts this film at the extreme of the mythological-ornamental trend of modernism. While the parallel universe can be interpreted in this film as the content of the auteur's consciousness, Tarkovsky's next film, *Stalker* (1978), lacks already the narrative framework anchored in an auteur's position and presents the parallel universe as an empirical experience inseparable from everyday reality. That is where Tarkovsky transgressed in his oeuvre the thin and almost invisible borderline between modern and postmodern.

The Disappearance of Nothingness

The concept of the postmodern with regard to the arts emerged in the beginning of the seventies. In architecture and in the fine arts very clear traits distinguish the modern and the postmodern periods. In literature and in cinema, stylistic differences are not so clear-cut, especially if one needs to delimit the two periods. I mentioned earlier that one can find several postmodern traits as early as the beginning of the seventies, especially in the new German cinema, although we could not say that these traits were concentrated the same way modern characteristics accumulated during the fifties. Postmodern, unlike modern, cinema had not a massive presence in the art film industry. The most that can be said is that from the eighties onward the most innovative pieces of European art cinema followed some postmodern rather than modern principles. To find the end of modernism in the cinema one must address the postmodern period and its style.

As mentioned, the common aspect of modernist forms is a sense of empirical reality existing behind the aesthetic form, even if this reality is conceived of as an abstract and conceptual entity. The idea of nothingness became in modernism the only verifiable reality behind the surface of the empirical world. Even if reality disappears from the background behind the work of art, the auteurial text stating this disappearance and pointing to its lack takes the place of empirical reality. The work of art becomes the expression of nothingness and by the same virtue the ultimate reality. The end of the modernist paradigm can be detected where this sense of empirical reality in the form of nothingness disappears.

The clearest example of this point is Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) and comparing it to an earlier film that also analyzes the relation between auteur and reality: Antonioni's 1966 *Blow-Up*. This brief comparison will illustrate how postmodern thinking eliminates nothingness, still a transcendental value in Antonioni's film. Instead of spiritualizing human emptiness, Greenaway deprives human alienation of its pathos or transcendental meaning (the free individual before the power of nothingness) and depicts alienation in the most cruel and disillusioned manner: the individual literally becomes an object among other objects.

In both films the main character is an artist who takes pictorial records of a certain territory, and after having made/taken the pictures evidence of a murder is discovered in them. Later on, the fact of the murder is verified in one way or another. Undoubtedly, this motif bears on the relation between art and reality, so the different uses of it will suggest much about the attitude the artists have towards the question of representation.

Both artists begin with taking pictures in a park. Antonioni's photographer hangs around in a park without any specific purpose when a couple starts to attract his attention. He finds their behavior peculiar enough to follow them. The whole scene becomes suspicious for him only when the woman, noticing him taking pictures, attempts to stop him and to remove the film from the camera. He goes home, develops the film, and examines the pictures closely. Enlarging a certain detail multiple times he discovers a man hidden in the bushes holding a gun pointed at the man of the couple. First he thinks that he prevented the murder by photographing the couple. But further enlargements disclose something like a body lying under the bushes. He rushes out in the park at night and discovers the corpse of the man he saw that afternoon. Everything becomes clear: he was a witness to a murder. What happens hereafter only confirms this fact: someone breaks into the studio turning everything upside down and stealing the negative and all the prints as well, except the last one in which nothing identifiable

can be seen other than a series of grainy shapes. As the corpse disappears also the next morning, no evidence is left of what he witnessed.

Greenaway's draughtsman, Mr. Neville, is given a contractual assignment to make twelve drawings of a property during the absence of the landlord. The contract is made between the draughtsman and the landlord's wife, who says that she wants to surprise her husband with the drawings on his return. It turns out later that the landlord is murdered, his body is found in a ditch, and the draughtsman is accused of being involved in the crime as various objects related to the murder can be found in his drawings.

In both films the landscape hides a murder. While in Antonioni's film the story is directly connected to the landscape, since the body is physically hidden in it, in Greenaway's film the landscape is not physically related to the murder. It is manipulated (by Mrs. Talmann) so that the signs of the murder lead to knowledge of the murder and not to the murder itself.

In both cases there is a conspiracy in connection with the landscape, but in *The Draughtsman's Contract* the pictures are part of this conspiracy and serve to conceal it, while in *Blow-Up* the pictures reveal the conspiracy. Representation for Antonioni is something that exists independently of what it represents. There is a *rational* relationship between image and reality. For Greenaway representation as an object is part of what it represents, so there is an *organic* relationship between image and reality. In *Blow-Up* the image represents what there is in reality even if it is imperceptible to the human eye. Knowledge is conveyed by scientific methods through technical enlargement. The photographer's method follows the logic of scientific research: observation, hypothesis, experiment, result, and verification of the result. The draughtsman's drawings represent not what there *is* in reality, but what one *knows* about reality. As Mrs. Talmann says to Mr. Talmann, "The drawings contain evidence that Mr. Neville may be cognizant to the death of my father." And in fact, since the work of art is the trace of a disappearance, nothing can prevent Mrs. Talmann from proving that Mr. Neville knew about Mr. Herbert's disappearance, too.

In both cases reality is something different from the representation. There is another important difference: in *Blow-Up* the murder is discovered with the help of the image. In *The Draughtsman's Contract* the images have no function in the discovery of the body of Mr. Herbert. In *Blow-Up* the hypothesis is that the representation is an *abstraction* of reality, and the whole richness of reality is "compressed" into the elements of this abstraction. And with the right hypothesis it is possible to "decompress" reality from the abstract image. It is necessary to have imagination, but one has to have *the right* imagination: the more the picture is enlarged the more verisimilitude disap-

pears from it. At the end what the photographer has in his hands is nothing more that a set of nonfigurative shapes, similar to what the photographer's neighbor-painter makes. With the right hypothesis and the right imagination however, it is possible to identify reality even through this abstract image. That is the most fundamental presupposition of modern art.

In *The Draughtsman's Contract* representation is not an abstract "compression" of reality but a partial aspect of it. Mr. Neville wants to record the reality of the property without human intervention. But to cancel out the human presence is already a human intervention and that is why he cannot notice other human interventions (i.e., those of Mrs. Talmann). Thus the drawings become a result of a web of human intentions, and therefore nothing can be found in the pictures that has not been arranged already to be in them. Reality itself is arranged for the purpose of the representation, which means that reality—which is behind the drawings of Mr. Neville—*is already a picture.* Mr. Neville will never be able to find out on his own the meaning of the ladder, the jacket, the shirt, and the riding boots. Mrs. Talmann has to draw his attention to it. Representation has to be accompanied by interpretation. Again, these items are not signs of the murder; they are signs of a conspiracy of which the murder is but one element. The picture is not an image of reality, it is the image of a conspiracy, of an arrangement; ultimately, it is an image of another image, an artifact (drawing) about another artifact (conspiracy).

All this leads us to the next fundamental difference. In *Blow-Up*, by finding the corpse under the bushes the photographer's hypothesis is verified, but when he returns home to find his apartment has been robbed, his evidence has disappeared. The only image left is the last enlarged photo in which no identifiable object can be seen for those who do not know how to look at it. When he shows it to the girl from the neighborhood, she says, "It looks like one of Bill's paintings." The corpse disappears the next morning and then the only evidence left for him from his story is a photograph that is like an abstract painting. He is the only one who knows what those spots on the picture are evidence of, and we know that he is right about it. Nobody else in the film is. He is alone with his truth, and if he wants to communicate it, he has no evidence to back himself up. All he has is a story and a nonfigurative image. His picture is a thing that is meant to be evidence but is not. It is a nonthing as evidence. The artist knows the truth but he has nothing to prove it with. More precisely: he has a *nothingness* to prove it with. That nothingness is in fact something, a physical object, an imprint of a piece of reality disappeared: the work of art, but that thing contains the truth for others only as *his* knowledge or *his* fantasy. Kierkegaard's literal definition of nothingness is "a dreaming spirit, like an apparition that

cannot be grasped." The ultimate certainty for an artist is that he is alone with his "dreaming spirit" and his art, the truthfulness of which he is deeply convinced, appears as no evidence for others, it appears as *nothing but art*. But this responds to the Sartrian definition too: nothingness, which is left for him is a lack, it is the absence of something that is expected to be there. It is not emptiness, it is rather "a hole," a sign or imprint of a disappearance, a sign of what there is not and what there should be.[4] And if one acknowledges nothingness as a sign of absence, nothingness can turn into something, a powerful thing. It can be a basis of a community of people who believe in nothingness as the ultimate certainty in art, the sign of everything that has disappeared and everything that can be an object of human expectation. And that is shown in the last scene of the *Blow-Up*, where a group of youngsters pretend to play tennis in the park where the photographer's story took place. Thomas watches them, and when the "ball" rolls off the tennis court, everybody looks at him and expects him to pick it up and throw it back. And so he does. Now he has learned how to play according to the rules of art. That is where he becomes an artist in the modern sense.

The draughtsman has no imagination, says Mrs. Talmann, he draws what he sees. He doesn't want to find anything, and so he prepares the ground for a dehumanized landscape where everything is but an object. He cannot reveal the conspiracy hidden in the landscape because he is one element of that conspiracy. He eliminates humans from his pictures, and he eliminates Mrs. Herbert as a human being in that he contractually makes her a sexual object serving his pleasure. The draughtsman makes objects that refer to other objects, which makes the world consist of an infinite series of objects and their references. Step by step, the draughtsman himself becomes an element of this series of objects. First, Mrs. Talmann proposes a second contract according to which he functions as a sexual object for her, then Mr. Talmann and his company propose to him a third "contract," whose third point stipulates that they turn him into an immobile "object," that is, kill him. The draughtsman arrives at some kind of nothingness as well. But this nothingness is an objectified one, and taken in the literal sense: death of the artist and destruction of the drawings. Where everything is objectified nothing is hidden. Everything is visible, and everything is what it seems.

In Greenaway's film, the picture is not a representation of the same order as the photographer's picture, however abstract this photograph may be. It is organized by the same rules by which reality is constructed. In *Blow-Up*

4. "Nothingness is not existing, Nothingness has been, Nothingness does not annihilate itself, Nothingness is annihilated." *L'être et le néant*, 58.

there is reality and there is the picture. Reality disappears behind the picture; it turns into a representation of a memory. In *The Draughtsman's Contract* a fantasy (interpreted as conspiracy) makes the picture. Nothingness (what there is not and what there should be) is not a conceptual result of representation, it is a mental starting point (a wish that there be no living element including Mr. Herbert) becoming an objective and physical fact: death and destruction. Nothingness (the eliminated human element) here is found at the starting point of the picture and becomes at the end the real object: two dead bodies. In *Blow-Up* the creative process starts from a real fact, which turns into a memory or fantasy, a nothingness. In one case disappearance or nothingness is *spiritualized,* in the other case it is *objectified.*

In both films the gap between the work of art and reality is filled in with the artist's fantasy, knowledge, or memory. However there is a crucial difference, the last one. Antonioni says that if there are enough people who accept art as pretending, even if there is no ball and no racket, what the clowns play will still be tennis. The real objects themselves can be disregarded in representation, provided that abstraction contains all the consensual rules and relations of reality. The objects themselves are not important, the rules and the relations are, because these rules construct what is a common knowledge about reality. Representing this common knowledge *even if it does not look real* is, in the final analysis, representing reality. That is how nothingness becomes the other side of being. Greenaway proposes a different interpretation. Reality as it appears to us is an actual arrangement of objects. We cannot disregard the objects because their arrangement represents not a hierarchical system of rules known and accepted by all but rather different options, and each of them may tell different alternative stories. Representation is not an abstraction of reality; it is only partial knowledge about it. Abstraction is not possible on the grounds that the rules and relations are fixed for everyone. There are no unique and consensual uses of the objects, just a series of conventions that are reflections of different human intentions.

In *Blow-Up* memory becomes art, while in *The Draughtsman's Contract* art becomes a memory. For Antonioni art is nothingness because it has the power to represent being as absence. For Greenaway art is nothingness because as soon as it is objectified it becomes a disappeared reality itself. But when art is absent nothingness equals nothing. In the final analysis, for Antonioni art is *something other than reality,* for Greenaway art is *nothing other than reality.* In *Blow-Up* nothingness *is* behind the picture, in *The Draughtsman's Contract* nothing else is behind the picture but another picture.

From this, we may come to a conclusion about the kind of vision of the world that cannot be considered as belonging to the modern paradigm.

According to a modernist conception rational abstraction and the common acceptance of its rules lead to the heart of reality. Artistic self-reflection has a function of clarifying even more the process of how abstraction works. This is to say that reality is hidden somewhere behind the picture as a lack, an absence, or a disappearance that can be revealed as such by representation. We cannot find anything like this in *The Draughtsman's Contract*. For Greenaway reality can be grasped only as an infinite series of representations, none of which contains "the heart of the matter" the same way the gun and the body do. Reality consists of different series of representations, which in their turn consist of repetitions of objects where each object represents a variation.

An essential part of modern art is the recognition of the power of nothingness as a transcendental value. Nothingness is a serious thing for it represents the lack of important beings and real values. It takes the place of missing beings and becomes a transcendental value in itself as man's freedom. The end of modernist art comes with the moment when the problem of nothingness disappears as a serious question, where nothingness is not discovered anymore behind the "scene," when nothingness is no longer a value, no longer the opposite dimension of being, no longer a power of transcendence, because *common knowledge about "what is missing" no longer exists*.

Appendix

A Chronology of Modern Cinema

	1958	1959	1960
France	*Hiroshima, My Love* *The 400 Blows*	*Black Orpheus* *The Human Pyramide* *The Sign of Leo* *Pickpocket*	*Zazie in the Subway* *Shoot the Piano Player* *The Little Soldier* *Breathless*
Italy			*L'avventura* *La dolce vita*
Poland		*The Night Train*	*Joan of the Angels*
Sweden			
Great Britain			
Soviet Union			
Czechoslovakia			
Hungary			
West Germany			
Spain			
Yugoslavia			
Switzerland			
Greece			
Belgium			
Mexico			

1961	1962	1963	1964
Last Year at Marienbad *A Woman Is a Woman* *Jules and Jim* *Cléo from 5 to 7* *Adieu Philippine* *Paris Belongs to Us* *Chronicle of a Summer*	*Jeanne d'Arc* *My Life to Live*	*The Immortal* *Muriel* *The Carabineers* *The Fire Within*	*A Married Woman* *Band of Outsiders* *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*
La notte	*Eclipse* *The Grim Reaper*	*8 1/2* *The Fiancés*	*The Red Desert* *Juliet of the Spirits* *Before the Revolution* *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*
	Knife in the Water		*The Saragossa Manuscript*
Through a Glass Darkly	*Winter Light*	*The Silence* *Raven's End*	*491*
	The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner *Eva*	*Tom Jones*	
	Childhood of Ivan		*Welcome* *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*
		Black Peter *Joseph Kilian* *Eva and Vera*	*Diamonds of the Night* *Limonade Joe*
		Cantata	*My Way Home*
	The Exterminating Angel		

A Chronology of Modern Cinema (*continued*)

	1965	1966	1967
France	*Alphaville* *Pierrot le fou* *Happiness*	*The War Is Over* *Trans-Europ-Express* *The Creatures* *Balthazar* *Masculine-Feminine* *Made in U.S.A* *Two or Three Things* *I Know About Her*	*Playtime* *La Chinoise* *Marie for Memory* *Week-end* *Mouchette* *La Musica* *The Collector* *Belle de jour*
Italy	*Sandra of a Thousand Delights* *Fist in His Pocket*	*The Hawks and the Sparrows* *Blow-Up*	*Oedipus Rex*
Poland			
Sweden		*Persona* *Here Is Your Life*	*I Am Curious (Yellow)*
Great Britain	*The Loved One*	*Marat/Sade*	*Ulysses* *Poor Cow*
Soviet Union		*Andrei Rublev*	*Short Encounters*
Czechoslovakia	*Intimate Lighting* *The Loves of a Blonde*	*Daisies* *A Report on the Party* *Return of the Prodigal Son* *Closely Watched Train* *Marketa Lazarová*	*The Firemen's Ball*
Hungary	*The Round-Up* *Children's Sicknesses* *Ten Thousand Suns*	*Cold Days* *Father*	*The Red and the White*
West Germany	*Not Reconciled* *It*	*The Young Törless* *Yesterday Girl*	
Spain	*The Hunt*	*Nine Letters to Bertha*	
Yugoslavia	*Man Is Not a Bird*		*The Switchboard Operator*
Switzerland			
Greece			
Belgium			
Mexico	*Simon of the Desert*		

1968	1969	1970	1971
The Man Who Lies *Je t'aime, je t'aime* *The Joy of Knowledge*	*The Wind from the East* *Le lit de la vierge* *A Gentle Woman* *My Night With Maud* *Crazy Love*	*Inner Scar*	*Eden and After* *Traffic*
Teorema *The Partner*	*Satyricon* *Porcile* *Dillinger Is Dead* *Medea*	*The Spider's Stratagem* *The Conformist*	
	Everything for Sale *Hunting Flies*	*Landscape after Battle* *The Birch Wood*	
Shame *I Am Curious (Blue)* *Hour of the Wolf*	*Passion of Anna* *The Rite*		
If	*Kes*	*Performance*	*Family Life*
An Unusual Exhibition *The Color of Pomegranates*	*The Eve of Ivan Kupalo* *Pirosmani*		*Long Goodbyes*
The Cremator	*Fun Stuff (Larks on a String)* *The Parson's End*		
Walls		*Love*	*Sinbad*
The Broom... *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria* *Signs of Life* *The Chronicle of Anna Madgalena Bach*	*Othon* *Eika katappa* *Love Is Colder Than Death* *Katzelmacher*	*The American Soldier* *The Gods of the Plague* *Ingolstadt Pioneers* *Even Dwarfs Started Small*	*Beware of a Holy Whore* *The Goalie's Fear of the Penalty Kick* *Whity*
		The Garden of Delights	
			W.R.—Mysteries of the Organism
	Charles, Dead or Alive	*Do Everything...*	*Salamander*
		Reconstruction	

A Chronology of Modern Cinema (*continued*)

	1972	1973	1974
France	*All's Well* *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*	*The Mother and the Whore*	*Progressive Slidings of Pleasure* *Celine and Julie Go Boating* *Lancelot of the Lake* *India Song* *Sweet Movie* *The Phantom of Liberty*
Italy	*Fellini's Roma* *Liza*	*Amarcord* *The Last Tango* *La grande bouffe* *Love and Anarchy*	*Don't Touch the White Woman!*
Poland	*The Wedding*	*The Hour-Glass Sanatorium*	
Sweden	*Cries and Whispers*		
Great Britain		*O Lucky Man!*	
Soviet Union	*Solaris* *Happy Go Luck*	*The Red Snowball...*	*Mirror*
Czechoslovakia			
Hungary		*25 Firemen's Street*	*74, Bastion*
West Germany	*Ludwig–Requiem for a Virgin King* *The Scarlet Letter* *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* *The Death of Maria Malibran* *Aguirre: The Wrath of God*	*Alice in the Cities*	*Moses and Aaron* *Kaspar Hauser* *False Movement* *Effie Briest* *Fear Eats the Soul*
Spain	*Anna and the Wolves*	*Spirit of the Beehive*	
Yugoslavia			
Switzerland	*Tonight or Never*		*La paloma*
Greece	*Days of 36*		
Belgium	*Hotel Monterrey*		
Mexico			

1975	1976	1977	1978
Number Two *How Is It Going?*		*The Van* *The Devil Probably* *That Obscure Object of Desire*	
Seven Beauties	*Fellini's Casanova*		
Mother Küsters *Fear of Fear*	*Fortini cani* *Heart of Glass* *Kings of the Road*	*Hitler*	
	Cria!		
	Shadow of Angels		
The Traveling Players		*The Huntsmen*	
Jeanne Dielman			*The Meetings of Anna*

Selected Bibliography

French New Wave

Baecque, Antoine de, and Charles Tesson. *La nouvelle vague: Une légende en question*. Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1998.

Bazin, André, and Jean Narboni. *Le cinéma français de la Libération à la Nouvelle Vague (1945–1958)*. Petite Bibliothèque Des Cahiers du cinéma. Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1998.

Bergala, Alain. *Nul mieux que Godard*. Collection Essais: Cahiers du cinéma. Paris: Éditions Cahiers du cinéma, 1999.

Blue, James. *Thoughts on Cinéma Vérité and a Discussion with the Maysles Brothers*. Michigan State University Press, 1971.

Cerisuelo, Marc. *Jean-Luc Godard*. Collection Spectacle/Poche, 4. Paris: L'herminier, Éditions des Quatre-Vents, 1989.

Clouzot, Claire. *Le cinéma français depuis la nouvelle vague*. Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1972.

Delavaud, Gilles, Jean-Pierre Esquenazi, and Marie-Françoise Grange. *Godard et le métier d'artiste actes: Colloque de Cerisy*. Paris: Harmattan, 2001.

Dixon, Wheeler W. *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Douchet, Jean. *French New Wave*. New York: Hazan Editions in association with D.A.P., 1998.

Dubois, Philippe, ed. *Recherche sur Chris Marker*. Théorème. Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2002.

Durgnat, Raymond. *French Cinema: The A–Z guide to the "New Wave."* Motion Monograph. Loughton: Motion Publications, 1963.

Giroud, Françoise. *Le nouvelle vague: Portraits de la jeunesse*. L'Air Du Temps. Paris: Gallimard, 1958.

Guigue, Arnaud. *François Truffaut: La culture et la vie*. Paris: Harmattan, 2002.

Holmes, Diana, and Robert Ingram. *François Truffaut*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998.

Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard. Vol. 1. Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1998.

Kawin, Bruce F. *Mindscreen: Bergman, Godard, and First-Person Film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Lesage, Julia. *Jean-Luc Godard: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979.
Loshitzky, Yosefa. *The Radical Faces of Godard and Bertolucci.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995.
MacCabe, Colin, and Sally Shafto. *Godard: A Portrait of the Artist at Seventy.* 1st American ed. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2004.
MacCabe, Colin, Mick Eaton, Laura Mulvey, and Jean-Luc Godard. *Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics.* London: Macmillan, 1980.
Sémoulé, Jean. *Bresson.* Paris: Flammarion, 1993.
Silverman, Kaja, and Harun Farocki. *Speaking about Godard.* New York: New York University Press, 1998.
Sterritt, David. *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard: Seeing the Invisible.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
Temple, Michael, and James S. Williams. *The Cinema Alone: Essays on the Work of Jean-Luc Godard, 1985–2000.* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000.
Truffaut, François, and Dominique Rabourdin. *Truffaut by Truffaut.* New York: Abrams, 1986.
Truffaut, François, Gilles Jacob, Claude de Givray, Gilbert Adair, and Jean-Luc Godard. *Correspondence, 1945–1984.* 1st American ed. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.
Walz, Eugene P. *François Truffaut: A guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982.

Modern Italian Cinema

Antonioni, Michelangelo, and Pierre Leprohon. *Michelangelo Antonioni.* Paris: Éditions Seghers, 1969.
Bondanella, Peter. *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present.* New York: Continuum, 2001.
Brunette, Peter. *Roberto Rossellini.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
Budgen, Suzanne. *Fellini.* London: British Film Institute, 1966.
Joubert-Laurencin, Herve. *Pasolini: Portrait du poète en cineaste.* Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1995.
Pasolini, Pier Paolo. *Empirismo eretico.* Milan: Garzanti, 1972.
Rondolino, Gianni. *Roberto Rossellini.* Florence: La nuova italia, 1974.
Rossellini, Roberto. *My Method.* New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1992.

Modern Eastern European Film

Balski, Grzegorz, ed. *Directory of Eastern European Film-Makers and Film, 1945–1991.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1992.
Bíró, Yvette. *Jancsó.* Paris: Éditions Albatros, 1977.
Buttafava, Giovanni. *Miklós Jancsó.* Florence: La nuova Italia, 1974.
Callow, Simon, and Dusan Makavejev. *Shooting the Actor; or, The Choreography of Confusion.* London: Hern, 1990.
Goulding, Daniel J. *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

———. *Post New Wave Cinema in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

———. *Five Filmmakers; Tarkovsky, Forman, Polanski, Szabó, Makavejev.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Hames, Peter. *The Czechoslovak New Wave.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Kaplan, Ann, ed. *Women in Film Noir.* London: BFI Publishing, 1994.

Karpinski, Maciej. *The Theatre of Andrzej Wajda.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Liehm, Mira et Antonin J. *Les cinémas de l'est de 1945 a nos jours*. Paris: Éd. De Cerf, 1989.

Michalek, Boleslaw. *The Cinema of Andrzej Wajda.* London: Tantivy; and South Brunswick: A. S. Barnes, 1973.

Portuges, Catherine. *Screen Memories: The Hungarian Cinema of Márta Mészáros.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Turaj, Frank. *The Modern Cinema of Poland.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

New German Cinema

Byg, Barton. *Landscapes of Resistance: The German Films of Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Estève, Michel, and Barthélemy Amengual. *Wim Wenders*. Études Cinématographiques, 159–64. Paris: Minard, 1989.

Grosoli, Fabrizio. *Werner Herzog*. Il Castoro Cinema, 85. Florence: La nuova Italia, 1981.

Rentschler, Eric. *West German Film in the Course of Time: Reflections on the Twenty Years since Oberhausen*. New York: Redgrave Publishing, 1984.

Sanford, John. *The New German Cinema.* New York: Da Capo Paperback, 1980.

Santner, Eric L. *Stranded Objects: Mourning, Memory, and Film in Postwar Germany.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Syberberg, Hans Jürgen. *Syberbergs Filmbuch.* Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1976.

———. *Hitler: Ein Film aus Deutschland.* Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978.

Bergman

Bergman, Ingmar, and G. William Jones. *Talking with Ingmar Bergman.* Dallas: SMU Press, 1983.

Bergman, Ingmar, and Vlada Petric. *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman.* New York: Redgrave, 1981.

Cohen, Hubert I. *Ingmar Bergman: The Art of Confession.* Twayne's Filmmakers Series. New York: Twayne; Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Canada; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993.

Cowie, Peter. *Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography.* New York: Scribner, 1982.

Donner, Jörn. *The Films of Ingmar Bergman: From Torment to All These Women.* New York: Dover Publications, 1972.

Gervais, Marc. *Ingmar Bergman: Magician and Prophet*. Montreal and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.

Ketcham, Charles B. *The Influence of Existentialism on Ingmar Bergman: An Analysis of the Theological Ideas Shaping a Filmmakers's Art.* Studies in Art and Religious Interpretation, 5. Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1986.

Lauder, Robert E. *God, Death, Art, and Love: The Philosophical Vision of Ingmar Bergman.* New York: Paulist Press, 1989.

Livingston, Paisley. *Ingmar Bergman and the Rituals of Art.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Long, Robert Emmet. *Ingmar Bergman: Film and Stage.* New York: H. N. Abrams, 1994.

Marker Abrams, Lise-Lone, and Frederick J. Marker. *Ingmar Bergman: A Life in the Theater.* 2nd ed. Directors in Perspective. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Mosley, Philip. *Ingmar Bergman: The Cinema as Mistress.* London and Boston: Marion Boyars, 1981.

Steene, Birgitta. *Ingmar Bergman.* Twayne's World Authors Series, TWAS 32–Sweden. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1968.

Törnqvist, Egil. *Between Stage and Screen: Ingmar Bergman Directs.* Film Culture in Transition. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995.

Buñuel

Acevedo-Muñoz, Ernesto R. *Buñuel and Mexico: The Crisis of National Cinema.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Aranda, J. Francisco. *Luis Buñuel: A Critical Biography.* 1st American ed. New York: Da Capo Press, 1976.

Baxter, John. *Buñuel.* London: Fourth Estate, 1994.

Buache, Freddy. *The Cinema of Luis Buñuel.* London: Tantivy Press; and New York: A. S. Barnes, 1973.

Buñuel, Luis. *My Last Sigh.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Delgado, Manuel, and Alice Jan Poust. *Lorca, Buñuel, Dalí: Art and Theory.* Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press; and London: Associated University Presses, 2001.

Evans, Peter William. *The Films of Luis Buñuel: Subjectivity and Desire.* Oxford: Clarendon Press; and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Mellen, Joan. *The World of Luis Buñuel: Essays in Criticism.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Miscellaneous

Daniel Schmid. Zurich: Dossier Pro Helvetia, 1982.

D'Lugo, Marvin. *The Films of Carlos Saura: The Practice of Seeing.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Deveny, Thomas. *Cain on Screen: Contemporary Spanish Cinema.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1993.

Kinder, Marsha. *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Murphy, Robert. *Sixties British Cinema.* London: BFI Publishing, 1992.

Rodowick, David Norman. *The Crisis of Political Modernism: Criticism and Ideology in Contemporary Film Theory.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Rohdie, Sam. *Promised Lands: Cinema, Geography, Modernism.* London: British Film Institute, 2001.

Rother, Rainer. *Mythen der Nationen: Völker im Film.* Munich: Koehler & Amelang, 1998.

Sadoul, Georges. *Dziga Vertov.* Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, 1971.

Schaub, Martin. *Der neue Schweizer Film, 1963–1974.* Zurich: Pro Helvetia, 1975.

Schuster, Mel. *The Contemporary Greek Cinema.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1979.

Siska, William Charles. *Modernism in the Narrative Cinema: The Art Film as a Genre.* Dissertations on Film. New York: Arno Press, 1980.

Sobchack, Vivian Carol. *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television, and the Modern Event.* AFI Film Readers. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Index of Names and Movie Titles

8 1/2, 67–68, 111, 194–95, 209, 213, 294–95, 297, 302, 316, 316n, 317–22, 341, 387, 389
12 Angry Men, 112–13
25 Fireman's Street, 378
400 Blows, The, 69, 78, 81, 83, 102, 172, 291, 305, 310
491, 173, 337

Abramson, Hans, 313
Abuladze, Tengiz, 283
Ackerman, Chantal, 129, 135, 135n, 141, 156–58, 161, 211, 361, 382
Adalen Riots, 362
Adieu Philippine, 208, 277, 279, 324–25
Adrift, 355n
Adventure Starts Here, 314
Age of Daydreaming, The, 172, 323
Age of Gold, 31n
Agnus Dei, 181
Alea, Tomás Gutiérrez, 118, 364
Alex in Wonderland, 322
Alexandrov, Grigori, 238, 239n, 298n
Alice in the Cities, 103, 159, 209
All My Good Countrymen, 355
All That Heaven Allows, 197
All's Well, 192, 196, 208, 367, 369
Allemagne neuf-zero, 115n
Allen, Woody, 67
Alov, Alexander, 283
Alphaville, 115, 170, 314, 385
Amarcord, 339, 378, 385
American Soldier, The, 198, 210
Amiard-Chevral, Claudine, 239n
An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, 108
An Unusual Exhibition, 116
Anathor, 181
And the Ship Sails On, 200, 385
Anderson, Lindsay, 116, 310
Andersson, Bibi, 167, 344
Andersson, Harriet, 167, 362n
Andrei Rublev, 68, 96, 102, 188, 213, 288, 341–43, 387, 389, 393
Andrew, Dudley, 39
Angelopoulos, Theo, 129, 156, 181, 190, 206, 211, 292, 371–72, 376
Anger, Kenneth, 32, 210
Angst Eats the Soul, 383
Anna and the Wolves, 379
Antonioni, Michelangelo, 38, 63, 66, 68–69, 78, 81, 83, 89, 96–98, 100, 103, 125, 127–29, 129, 130n, 137, 141, 146, 149, 149n, 150, 150n, 151–52, 152n, 153–54, 154nn, 155–56, 158–59, 161, 163–65, 167, 189–90, 193, 193n, 195n, 199, 206, 208, 211, 213, 247, 256, 256n, 257, 257n, 259–60, 263–64, 267–71, 276–77, 279, 283, 287–88, 291–92, 294–96, 299, 299n, 300, 302–303, 322–23, 325–26, 329–31, 331n, 334, 336–37, 339, 341–42, 345–48, 348n, 362, 372, 374n, 393, 395–96, 399

Arabian Nights, 339
Aristarco, Guido, 16n
Arnheim, Rudolf, 53, 53n
Assayas, Olivier, 291n
Ashes and Diamonds, 284, 289
Astruc, Alexandre, 38, 38n, 39, 39nn, 40, 40n, 41, 45, 116–17, 219, 219nn, 220, 224, 244
Attila, 378
Audrey, Jacqueline, 241
Augirre: The Wrath of God, 378
Aumont, Jacques, 201, 201n
Autant-Lara, Claude, 312
Ayache, Alain, 351n, 353n

Baby of Mâcon, The, 202
Bach, 260
Bacsó, Péter, 118, 355
Baecque, Antoine de, 28n, 35n, 40n, 172n, 249n
Bagful of Fleas, A, 326
Bailblé, Claude, 139n
Balázs, Béla, 53, 53n
Ballad of a Soldier, 284–85, 294
Balthazar, 144
Band of Outsiders, 36, 300, 314
Barrier, 165
Barthes, Roland, 65, 65n, 109, 109n, 124, 177, 177nn, 178, 232, 232n, 233–34, 234n, 364
Bartók, Béla, 176
Bastide, Régis, 233
Bástyasétány, 'hetvennégy, 75
Battle of the Rails, The, 246
Baudelaire, Charles, 10, 11, 11n, 35–36
Bazin, André, 28, 29n, 39, 39n, 41, 46, 46n, 47, 124, 219, 222, 222n, 223, 223n, 224, 240, 240nn, 249, 249n, 254n, 256, 256nn, 257, 260, 278
Beauregard, Georges de, 173
Beautiful May, 368
Becker, Jacques, 224, 312
Beckett, Samuel, 241
Before the Revolution, 84, 172, 260, 323, 337, 364
Beggar's Opera, The, 241
Belmondo, Jean-Paul, 101, 173, 297, 362n
Benayoun, Robert, 106n, 130n, 303n
Berdiaev, Nikolai, 94n
Bérénice, 223
Bergman, Ingmar, 5, 38, 49, 63, 66, 68–69, 81, 83, 96, 103–104, 112–13, 141, 161–66, 166n, 167, 167n, 172, 192, 206, 211, 218, 227–29, 229n, 230, 230n, 231, 241, 246, 269–70, 276, 278, 294–95, 300, 305, 313, 316–18, 336, 340, 340n, 341–48, 362, 363n
Bergson, Henri, 91n, 92n
Berhard, Ernest, 319
Berriau, Simone, 241
Bertolucci, Bernardo, 68, 73–74, 78, 84, 84n, 102, 118, 129, 131, 135, 141, 168–69, 172, 189, 206, 212, 260, 277–78, 293, 304, 311, 323, 337, 357, 364–65, 373
Betts, Ernest, 239n
Beware of a Holy Whore, 113
Bicycle Thief, The, 79, 87, 254, 279
Billard, Pierre, 291n
Birch Wood, The, 289
Birds, The, 248, 250
Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant, The, 113, 199
Björkman, Stig, 166
Björnstrand, Gunnar, 69, 167
Black Orpheus, 178, 291, 377
Black Peter, 78, 81, 84, 116, 209–10, 322, 324–27, 337
Blind Chance, 75
Blow-Up, 68, 96, 339, 341–42, 345, 348, 395–99
Blue, James, 281n
Boccaccio '70, 296
Bodry, Jean-Louis, 40n
Bódy, Gábor, 136
Bohm, 357
Bondanella, Peter, 183n, 187nn, 266n, 268n
Bonitzer, Pascal, 200–201, 201n
Bordwell, David, 34, 34n, 37, 37n, 46n, 57, 57nn, 58–59, 59n, 61, 72n, 78, 78n, 137, 137n, 240n, 301n, 303
Bory, Jean-Louis, 303
Bosio, Gianfranco De, 311n
Brabant, Charles, 241
Brakhage, Stan, 32
Brass, Tinto, 311n
Bread, Love, and Dreams, 255

Breathless, 66, 68, 74, 77, 94, 100–101, 125, 127, 132–34, 173, 197, 210, 247, 273, 292–97, 362n
Brecht, Bertolt, 60, 226n, 241, 358
Bresson, Robert, 36, 36n, 58, 118, 126–27, 131, 133, 137, 141, 141n, 142, 142n, 143–46, 146n, 147, 147nn, 148, 155–56, 161, 167, 193, 206, 212, 221–22, 222nn, 224, 236, 236n, 256, 271, 276, 288, 291, 291n, 300, 303, 305, 313, 331, 337, 359, 367–68, 394
Bridegroom, the Comedienne, and the Pimp, The, 196
Brontë, Emily, 366
Brook, Peter, 192, 201, 241, 337
Bruckner, Ferdinand, 197n
Brunetta, Gian Piero, 26n, 189n, 264, 264nn
Brunette, Peter, 262, 262n, 270n
Bruno, 297
Brusati, Franco, 311n
Budapest Tales, 378
Budgen, Suzanne, 277
Buñuel, Luis, 18, 31–32, 77–78, 81, 113–14, 159, 206, 212, 315, 336, 371, 376
Burch, Noël, 37, 37n, 42, 46–47, 70, 132, 136–37, 137n, 191n, 331n
Bürger, Peter, 7, 8n, 13n, 14, 14n, 15, 82n, 83n

Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The, 58, 190
Calinescu, Matei, 8n, 9nn, 10n, 14, 14n
Cameraman, The, 226n
Campion, Jane, 304
Camus, Marcel, 178, 291, 292, 377
Canal, The, 289
Cantata, 322–23, 329
Capriccio all'italiana, 296
Caproli, Bittorio, 311n
Carlsen, Henning, 69
Carné, Marcel, 16, 220, 312
Casablanca, 86
Case for the Rookie Hangman, A, 355n
Cassavetes, John, 60, 171
Cat's Play, 139
Cauchetier, Raymond, 101
Caughie, John, 221
Cayette, André, 312
Cayrol, Jean, 129, 232
Céline, 349
Cervantes, 225
Chabrol, Claude, 72, 83, 197, 247, 247n, 249nn, 296, 307, 312, 314
Charles III, 107
Charles, Dead or Alive, 173
Chatman, Seymour, 149, 149n, 150, 153, 154n
Childhood of Ivan, 108, 129, 286, 322, 336
Children's Sicknesses, 116, 323
Chronicle, 154
Chukhrai, Grigori, 284–85, 294
Chytilová, Vera, 169, 283, 326, 357, 360
Citti, Franco, 169
Clair, René, 16, 18, 21, 27, 31, 31nn, 220
Clayton, Jack, 310
Clément, René, 246, 312
Cléo from 5 to 7, 295, 314
Closely Watched Trains, 338
Clouzot, Claire, 40n, 170n
Cocteau, Jean, 241, 245
Coen brothers, 60
Cohn-Bendit, Daniel, 351–53
Cold Days, 113, 339
Collector, The, 305
Collet, Jean, 135n
Color of Pomegrantes, The, 180–81, 208, 210, 377
Comencini, Luigi, 255
Comolli, Jean-Louis, 362, 362nn, 363
Compagnon, Antoine, 13n, 14, 14n
Confession, The, 370–71
Confrontation, The, 181, 209, 330
Connelly, Frances S., 176, 176n
Constantine, Eddie, 115, 115n, 281
Contempt, 170, 314
Corneille, Pierre, 197
Costa-Gavras, 370
Coup de grâce, 364
Cousins, The, 197, 296
Coutard, Raoul, 297
Cranes Are Flying, The, 284
Crash, 60
Crazy Love, 201
Creatures, The, 75, 116, 139
Cremator, The, 355n, 360
Cria! 379

Cries and Whispers, 164, 295
Cry, The, 149–50, 153–54
Cserépy, Arzén von, 24
Current, 323

Daisies, 326, 360
Dalí, Salvador, 18
Damiani, Damiano, 311n
Danvers, V. Guillome, 23n
Dassin, 247
Davis, Miles, 298
Dear John, 314
Decameron, 339
Deferre, 1
Degli-Esposti, Cristina, 183n
Delahaye, Michel, 65n, 109n, 311n, 349, 349n, 364n
Delannoy, 224
Deleuze, Gilles, 34, 40, 40n, 41, 41n, 42–43, 43nn, 44–45, 48n, 56, 76n, 121, 127, 129, 237n, 244, 352n
Delluc, Louis, 16, 16n, 18–19, 19n
Delon, Alain, 169
Demy, Jacques, 115–16, 197
Denis, Marion, 106n
Dépardieu, Gérard, 364
Descartes, 39
Deserter and the Nomads, The, 355n
Diamonds of the Night, 336
Diary of a Country Priest, 36, 36n, 144
Dick, Bernard F., 187
Dirty Hands, 241
Döblin, Alfred, 60
Domarchi, Jean, 120n, 130n, 233nn, 249n
Don't Look Now—We're Being Shot At, 305
Don't Touch the White Woman! 199, 379
Donald, James, 238n
Donen, Stanley, 228
Doniol-Valcroze, Jacques, 120n, 128, 128n, 141, 141n, 308, 308n
Dönner, Jorn, 230n, 314
Dos Passos, 254n
Double Life of Veronique, The, 75
Douchet, Jean, 250n
Draughtsman's Contract, The, 348, 395–97, 399–400
Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 53, 53n, 58, 141, 142, 142n, 162, 166, 206, 239, 239n, 241–42, 242n, 243, 261, 292, 315–16, 394
Duchet, Jean, 260n, 266n
Dulac, Germain, 18, 23, 23n, 24, 306
Duras, Marguerite, 104, 129, 192, 211, 232, 298, 304, 314, 339, 363–64, 373, 382
Duvivier, 220

Earth Trembles, The, 79
Ecce Homo Homolka, 355n
Eclipse, 63, 68–69, 96–98, 127, 151, 153–55, 195n, 294–95, 374n
Eden and After, 110, 111n, 139, 212, 390–91
Eisenstein, Sergei, 27, 29–30, 58, 132, 136, 238, 239n, 261, 292, 298n
Eighth Night, 355n
Eldorado, 19n
Elektra, My Love, 181, 378
Elevator to the Gallows, 299
Eliot, T.S., 36
Elsaesser, Thomas, 122n, 357, 357n, 358, 358nn
Empire, 161
End of the Priest, The, 355n
Endre, Török, 94n
Enrico, Robert, 108
Entr'acte, 31
Enyedi, Ildikó, 75
Epstein, Jean, 18, 20, 20n, 21–22, 58, 126, 190
Erice, Víctor, 379
Etaix, 308
Europa '51, 261
Eustache, Jean, 304, 364
Eva, 207
Eve of Ivan Kupalo, The, 183–84
Everything for Sale, 68, 228, 322
Every Man for Himself and God Against All, 378
Exterminating Angel, The, 81, 113–14, 159, 209–10, 336

Faithful Heart, The, 190
Falk, Feliks, 286
False Movement, 69, 103
Family Nest, The, 68
Far from Vietnam, 296, 368
Fassbinder, Rainer Werner, 113, 127, 131, 141,

148, 159–60, 192, 197–98, 198nn, 199–200, 200n, 201–202, 206, 211–12, 293, 301, 304, 329, 337–38, 357, 383
Father, 172, 339
Faulkner, William, 241, 254n
Fear Eats the Soul, 197, 198n
Fellini, Federico, 66–68, 77, 81, 83, 87–88, 119, 146, 171, 178–79, 182–83, 183n, 186–87, 187nn, 188, 194, 194nn, 195, 195n, 200, 206, 208, 212–13, 215, 227, 230, 256, 256n, 257, 263, 271, 276, 276n, 277, 277n, 280, 291–92, 294–95, 295n, 296, 301–302, 316–17, 317n, 318–19, 319nn, 320, 320n, 321–22, 337, 339, 341, 348, 357, 378, 384–86
Fellini's Casanova, 68, 178, 200, 295, 339, 378, 385–86
Fellini's Roma, 178, 182, 339, 378, 385
Ferreri, Marco, 69, 113, 199, 311n, 371, 376, 379
Fescourt, Henri, 23n
Feuillade, Louis, 21
Fiancés, The, 68, 169, 212, 324, 337
Fieschi, Jean-André, 374n
Fight Club, 60
Film about Love, A, 172
Fina, Giuseppe, 311n
Finis terrae, 190
Fink, Guido, 286
Firemen's Ball, The, 116, 326, 360
First Name: Carmen, 384
Flaherty, Robert, 29, 170
Flaubert, 130, 177
Fleischmann, Peter, 190, 356, 357, 359
Flowers of St. Francis, The, 261
Fonda, Jane or Jean?, 367
Ford, Charles, 238n, 289n, 339
Foreman, Walter C., 183n
Forman, Milos, 78, 81, 84, 116, 168–69, 206, 211, 322–27, 329, 337, 357, 360
Foucault, Michel, 231
Fragola, Anthony N., 109nn
France, Mendès, 1
Freud, 351n
Freund, W., 8
Fridericus Rex, 24
Friedberg, Anne, 238n
Frodon, Jean-Michel, 48n
From Morning till Midnight, 190
Funeral Rites, 355n
Fusco, Giovanni, 299n

Gaál, István, 323
Gabbeh, 191n
Galeta, Robert, 41n
Gance, Abel, 18–19, 58
Garden of Delights, The, 64, 379
Garrel, Philippe, 129, 141, 156, 181, 201–202, 379
Gatti, Armand, 192
Gaulle, Charles De, 1, 90, 90n
Gazdag, Gyula, 75
Genet, Jean, 200
Gentry, Ric, 84n
Gerasimov, S.A., 282, 282n
Germany, 264
Germany Year 90 Nine Zero, 385
Germany, Year Zero, 80, 149, 254, 262
Gertrud, 315
Gillain, Anne, 40n
Giroud, Françoise, 291n
Goalie's Fear of the Penalty Kick, The, 81, 156
Godard, Jean-Luc, 16, 27, 29–30, 23, 35–36, 36n, 57–58, 66, 69, 81, 83–84, 94–95, 100–102, 115, 115n, 117–18, 120n, 125, 127–28, 131–32, 132n, 133–35, 135n, 137, 139, 141, 141n, 146–47, 152nn, 165, 165n, 166, 169–70, 172–74, 192, 195, 197–98, 200, 206, 211–13, 218n, 223, 227, 233, 247, 248n, 249n, 260, 269, 269n, 273, 277, 279, 292–94, 294n, 295–98, 300, 302–305, 307–308, 313–14, 337, 339, 339n, 340, 347–49, 349n, 350, 356, 356nn, 359, 361, 362n, 363–67, 367n, 368–69, 371–73, 376–77, 377n, 380–81, 384–85, 387
Gods of the Plague, 197–99, 209, 383
Goethe, Johann, 9
Gogol, 183
Good Time Girls, The, 307
Gone with the Wind, 86
Gorin, Jean-Pierre, 118, 369
Gospel according to Saint Matthew, The, 184, 210, 339, 377–78
Greenaway, Peter, 47, 126, 202, 208, 304, 348, 395–96, 398–400

Greenberg, Clement, 8n, 11, 11n, 12, 12nn, 13, 13nn, 44, 52
Gregoretti, Ugo, 311n
Grémillon, Jean, 190
Griffith, D.W., 16, 23
Grim Reaper, The, 68, 73–76, 102, 169, 209, 278, 311
Grinko, Nikolai, 343
Grodal, Torben, 86, 86n, 87
Guattari, Félix, 352n
Guitry, Sacha, 238n, 349
Gunning, Tom, 122n

Habberjam, Barbara, 41n
Habermas, Jürgen, 10n
Hames, Peter, 324, 324n, 326n
Hamlet, 241
Happiness, 68
Happy Go Lucky, 170
Has, Wojciech, 105, 184, 189, 286, 336, 378
Hašek, Jaroslav, 326
Hauser, Kaspar, 378
Hawks, Howard, 35, 36n, 224, 249n, 339
Heart of Glass, 379, 383
Hegel, 90
Heidegger, 91–92
Hemingway, Ernest, 241, 254n
Henry V, 241
Here and Elsewhere, 118–19, 380
Here and Some Place Else, 369
Here Is Your Life, 314
Heroism, 283, 289
Herz, Juraj, 360
Herzog, Werner, 197, 301, 329, 338, 378–79, 383
Hiroshima, My Love, 104–105, 120, 127, 130, 130n, 213, 224, 232–33, 291–95, 299, 303, 311, 320, 322, 389
Hitchcock, Alfred, 35, 67, 71–72, 112, 218–19, 228, 231, 247–48, 248nn, 249, 249nn, 250, 250n, 260–61, 339
Hitler, 190, 196
Hotel Monterrey, 161
Hour of the Wolf, 49, 162, 165–66, 362
Hour-Glass Sanatorium, The, 184, 378
Hovald, Patrice, 260, 260n
Hoveyda, Fereydoun, 282n
How Is It Going? 119, 369, 380
Hrabal, Bohumil, 326
Huillet, Danièle, 30, 32, 58, 298, 304–305, 313, 371
Hunger, 69
Hunt, The, 159, 336
Hunting Scenes from Bavaria, 190, 359
Huszárik, Zoltán, 139, 378

I, a Negro, 210, 281, 291, 295, 377
I Am Curious (Blue), 69, 209
I Am Curious (Yellow), 170, 209, 322, 364
I vitelloni, 271, 320, 320n
Il padre selvaggio, 186
Ilyenko, Iuri, 183–84
Immortal, The, 109, 111, 336, 389
In a Lonely Place, 228
India Song, 364
Inner Scar, The, 181, 379
Intimate Lighting, 326
Ivens, Joris, 368
It, 173, 311, 338

J'ai faim, j'ai froid, 135n
Jakin, Ladislav, 325
Jancsó, Miklós, 29–30, 61, 66, 68, 100, 113, 127, 129, 141, 146, 153, 156, 161, 178–79, 181, 190, 202, 206, 211, 213, 282–83, 290, 292, 299, 301, 305, 322–23, 329–31, 331n, 332–34, 337, 362n, 371, 376, 378–79, 393
Jannings, Emil, 242
Jarman, Derek, 26, 208, 304
Jarmusch, Jim, 141, 156, 256n
Jauss, Hans Robert, 7n, 8, 8n, 9, 9n
Jean Dielman, 156, 361
Jeancolas, Jean-Pierre, 220n
Jeanne, Renée, 238n
Joan of the Angels, 288, 288n
Job, The, 84, 278, 311, 323–25
Joke, The, 355n
Josephson, Erland, 167, 388
Jost, François, 110n
Joubert-Laurencin, Hervé, 372n, 374n
Journey to Italy, 117, 150, 254, 260, 265
Joy of Knowledge, The, 118, 139, 210, 356, 367

Joy of Learning, The, 192
Joyce, James, 103
Jules and Jim, 80, 294, 296, 307n, 314
Juliet of the Spirits, 68, 194n, 295, 337, 339
Jung, Carl Gustav, 65–66, 319n
Jutra, Claude, 280
Jutzi, Phil, 126

Kadár, Ján, 315, 327–28
Kafka, Franz, 326, 328–29, 336
Kalatozov, Mikhail, 284
Kandinsky, Vasili, 175
Karina, Anna, 359
Kardos, Ferenc, 116
Kardos, Sándor, 323
Kast, Pierre, 25, 112, 120n, 233, 319–20, 320n
Katzelmacher, 159–60, 198, 208
Kaurismäki, Aki, 141
Kawalerowicz, Jerzy, 113, 141, 159, 283, 283n, 286–89, 289n, 292, 295, 300–301, 323
Keaton, Buster, 67, 226, 226n
Kellner, Douglas, 351n
Kelly, Gene, 228, 231
Kezich, Tullio, 319
Khutsiyev, Marlen, 283
Kiarostami, Abbas, 126, 141, 156, 191n
Kierkegaard, 90, 397
Kieslowski, Krzysztof, 75
Kings of the Road, 103, 156, 158
Kitano, Takeshi, 141, 156
Klein, William, 368
Klimov, Elem, 116
Klimt, Gustav, 175 181
Klos, Elmar, 315, 327–28
Kluge, Alexander, 84, 118, 131, 170, 173, 211, 213, 293, 313, 337–38, 356, 357–59
Knife in the Water, 113, 159, 322
Kósa, Ferenc, 68, 339
Kosina, Frantisek, 325
Kovács, A.B., 47, 74n, 188n (András Bálint Kovács), 297n, 393n
Kovács, András, 113, 118, 339, 364
Kozintzev, 58
Kracauer, Siegfried, 190, 190n
Krankheit der Jugend, 197n
Künckelmann, 357
Kurosawa, Akira, 73–74, 115–116, 251, 271
Kyrou, Adonis, 31n, 249n

L'Accattone! 68, 169, 278, 294–95, 311, 378n
Ladies of Bois de Boulogne, The, 256
Lady Vanishes, The, 248
L'avventura, 38, 38n, 68, 81, 100, 127–28, 150–51, 153–55, 209, 269, 279, 291–92, 294–95, 330
L'Herbier, Marcel, 17–19, 19n
L'Inhumaine, 17, 19n
La Chinoise, 118, 196, 305, 314, 339, 349, 356, 364, 368–69
La dolce vita, 68, 81, 171, 178, 189, 215, 291, 295, 302, 317, 319
La grande bouffe, 113
La musica, 339, 363
La notte, 68–69, 89, 127, 151, 154–55, 195n, 208–10, 268, 294–95, 299, 322–23
La paloma, 379
La pacifista, 330, 379
La pointe-courte, 192n, 277–79
La punition, 281n
La strada, 87–88, 263, 304, 320n
Landscape after Battle, 289
Lang, Fritz, 315
Larks on a Thread, 355n
Last Year at Marienbad, 68, 76–77, 98, 104–106, 106n, 107–110, 127, 130–31, 154, 192–93, 193n, 194, 194n, 195, 197, 209, 213, 232, 237, 294–95, 303–304, 307, 313, 316, 321–22, 337, 341, 377, 389
Laugier, Jean-Louis, 295n
Lattuada, 296
Le bel âge, 112
Le lit de la vierge,181, 379
Le silence de la mer, 246, 270
Léger, Fernand, 18, 19n
Leglise, Paul, 25n
Lelouch, Claude, 368
Lem, Stanislav, 378n
Lenauer, Jean, 238
Lensing, Leo A., 200n
Leprohon, Pierre, 299
Les cousins, 72
Les gommes, 232

Lesage, Julia, 132n
Liehm, Antonin J., 328
Lightning over Water, 385
Limonade Joe, 116
Lindgren, Hans Magnus, 314
Lindsay, Vachel, 22, 22nn
Lipský, Oldr ch, 116
Little Foxes, The, 241
Little Soldier, The, 66, 127–28, 294–95, 296, 300, 307, 337, 368
Liza, 69, 113, 379
Loach, Ken, 278
Lollobrigida, Gina, 255
Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, The, 83, 172, 310
Losey, Joseph, 207, 247
Lotna, 286, 289
Love, 139
Love at Twenty, 296
Love in the City, 296
Love Is Colder Than Death, 159
Loved One, The, 116
Loves of a Blonde, The, 116, 324, 326
Lubitsch, Ernst, 242
Lucas, Hans, 248n
Ludwig—Requiem for a Virgin King, 197
Lumet, Sidney, 112
Lynch, David, 60, 138, 244

Maarek, Philippe, 371, 371n
Macbeth, 36, 36n
MacLaren, Norman, 27
Made in U.S.A., 305, 314, 349, 364, 368–69
Magic Hunter, 75
Magnani, Anna, 169
Magritte, 231
Makavejev, Dusan, 32, 116, 135–36, 206, 211, 305, 338, 365, 371–72, 376, 380–81
Makhmalbaf, Mohsen, 191n
Makk, Károly, 139
Maldone, 190
Malle, Louis, 69, 116, 132, 195, 291, 291n, 294–95, 299, 313, 323, 326
Malraux, André, 25, 307
Mamma Roma, 68, 169, 209, 294
Man and a Woman, A, 305
Man Escaped, A, 127, 141, 144–45, 291
Man Is Not a Bird, 338
Man Who Knew Too Much, The, 248
Man Who Lies, The, 76, 110, 139
Man with the Movie Camera, 226–27
Manet, 11
Mankiewicz, Joseph, 224
Manns, Torste, 166
Marat/Sade, 201, 337
Marcus, Laura, 238n
Marcuse, Herbert, 351nn, 352n, 353, 353nn
Marie, Michel, 139n
Marie for Memory, 379
Marion, Denis, 249n
Marker, Chris, 129, 368, 370
Marketa Lazarová, 213, 377
Markopoulos, Gregory, 27
Married Woman, A, 117, 165, 314, 337
Martyrs of Love, The, 360
Masculine-Feminine, 117, 170, 314, 364
Mastroianni, 316–17
Mayles Brothers, 281n
Mazurzky, Paul, 60, 322
Medea, 179, 183, 185–86, 339, 357, 378
Medvedkine, 370
Meetings of Anna, The, 156–57, 212
Mekas, Jonas, 28, 29n, 32
Méliès, Georges, 27
Melville, Jean-Pierre, 246, 270, 312
Memories of Underdevelopment, 118, 364
Menzel, Jirí, 338
Meusy, Jean-Jacques, 220n
Meyer, Russ, 32
Meyerhold, 239
Michalek, Bo es av, 288n, 289, 289n
Mida, Massimo, 253n
Miéville, Anne-Marie, 119
Mifune, Toshiro, 115
Mikhalkov, Nikita, 83
Milo, Sandra, 317n
Miracle in Milan, 263
Mirror, 68, 111, 129, 139, 161, 188, 190, 212, 322, 378, 386–94
Miss Julie, 241
Mistress, The, 314
Mitry, Jean, 27, 27n, 29

Mitterrand, François, 1
Mizoguchi, Kenji, 57–58, 60
Molander, Gustav, 241
Molière, 16
Monaco, Paul, 24n, 25n
Mondaldo, Giuliano, 311n
Money, 142–43
Montand, Yves, 367, 371
More, 362
Moretti, Nanni, 119, 304, 384
Móricz, Zsigmond, 334
Morrissey, Paul, 32
Moscati, Italo, 377n
Moses and Aaron, 148, 368
Most Beautiful Swindlers, The, 296
Mother and the Whore, The, 364
Mouchette, 144, 212, 305
Moullet, Luc, 307, 307n, 308, 308n
Mr. Arkadin, 224
Muir, Willa and Edwin, 328n
Mulholland Drive, 60
Munk, Andrzej, 283, 286, 289, 289n
Munk, Kaj, 241
Munro, 56
Muratova, Kira, 165
Muriel, 76–77, 104–105, 139, 139n, 295, 337, 389
Music Room, 191n
Musil, Robert, 66, 66n, 328–29
My Life to Live, 66, 84, 117–18, 127–28, 213, 294–96, 298, 302, 314, 337, 359
My Way Home, 329–30
My Twentieth Century, 75

N Took the Dice, 110
Naumov, Vladimir, 283
Nemec, Jan, 113, 141, 211, 336, 360
New Babylon, The, 58
Nietzsche, 90–91, 91n
Night and Fog, 130
Night Train, The, 113, 159, 286–88, 295, 300
Nights of Cabiria, 263, 318, 320n
Nine Letters to Bertha, 337
No Exit, 241
Noguez, Dominique, 29, 29n
North by Northwest, 71, 72n, 248
Nosferatu, 190
Nosferatu the Vampyre, 378
Nostalghia, 102, 188, 388, 393
Not Reconciled, 118, 148, 172, 209, 311, 337–38, 364
Number Two, 118, 367, 369, 387
Nykvist, Sven, 388

O Lucky Man! 116
O'Brian, John, 8n
O'Pray, Michael, 29n
Obsession, 257, 339
Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, An, 108
Oedipus Rex, 179, 183, 185–86, 357, 378, 378n
Oldest Profession, The, 296
Olivier, Laurence, 241
Olmi, Ermanno, 68, 84, 168–69, 206, 211–12, 277–78, 283, 311, 323–26, 337
Onibaba, 191n
Orchestra Rehearsal, 119, 385
Ordet, 241
Orphans, The, 23n
Orpheus, 245
Orr, John, 44, 44n, 45
Orsini, Valentino, 311n
Osborn, John, 241
Oshima, 200
Othon, 197
Oury, Gérard, 305
Ozouff, A., 21n
Ozu, Yasujiro, 57–58, 60, 137, 141, 142n

Pagliero, Marcel, 241
Pagnol, Marcel, 220, 220n
Paisan, 246, 254, 264
Panahi, Jafar, 156
Paradzhanov, Sergei, 175n, 178, 178n, 180–81, 301, 305, 337, 339, 357, 377
Parson's End, The, 360
Partner, The, 357, 364–65
Pasolini, Pier Paolo, 68, 73–74, 131, 168–69, 177–78, 178n, 182–84, 184n, 185–86, 186n, 187–88, 206, 209–12, 277–78, 294–95, 301, 304, 311, 339, 357, 365, 371–72, 372nn, 373–74, 374nn, 375–77, 377n, 378, 378n, 380

Passer, Ivan, 169, 283, 326, 357, 360
Passion, 362
Passion of Anna, The, 164, 172
Patino, Basilio, 337
Persona, 63, 69, 81, 96, 113, 165, 209, 336, 341–44
Petri, Elio, 116
Petronius, 378
Peyrefitte, Alain, 354
Picabia, Francis, 18, 31
Pickpocket, 58, 127, 133, 141, 144, 148, 149n, 208, 210, 291, 291nn
Pierrot le fou, 66, 94–95, 102, 170, 295, 314, 337, 339, 366
Pinel, Vincent, 24n, 220n
Pinter, Harold, 241
Piscator, Erwin, 60
Pitoëff, Sacha, 108
Playtime, 209
Plazewski, Jerzi, 283, 283n, 289n
Plfaum, Hans Günther, 309n
Polanski, Roman, 113, 141, 159, 282–83, 322–23
Pompidou, Georges, 353
Poor Cow, 278
Porcile, 68, 339, 357, 365, 375, 380
Postman Always Rings Twice, The, 247
Prédal, Réne, 243, 243n, 307, 307n, 308n, 368, 369n
Presse, Paris, 304
Prévert, Jacques, 241
Prinzler, Hans Helmut, 309n
Prison, 96, 228–31, 248, 270, 316–18
Private Vices, Public Pleasures, 181
Profession: Reporter, 103
Prospero's Books, 202
Proust, Marcel, 103
Psycho, 248
Pudovkin, Vsevolod, 238n, 298n
Pulp Fiction, 75, 138

Quaglietti, Lorenzo, 253n
Querelle, 199–200, 200n, 383

Radványi, Géza, 283
Rafelson, Bob, 60
Rashomon, 73–74, 76, 112, 251, 251n, 252, 271
Raven's End, 314
Ray, Man, 18
Ray, Nicholas, 228, 247, 386
Ray, Satyajit, 191n
Rear Window, 250
Red Desert, The, 68, 96, 151–53, 294, 302, 337, 339, 347
Red Psalm, 379
Red and the White, The, 68, 181, 208, 332–34
Reed, Carol, 246
Reinhardt, Max, 242
Reisz, Karel, 310
Renan, Sheldon, 28, 28n, 32, 32n
Renoir, Jean, 201n, 220, 253
Report on the Party and the Guests, A, 113, 360
Reservoir Dogs, 138
Resnais, Alain, 38, 60, 68, 75–78, 98, 104–106, 106nn, 107–108, 111, 120, 125, 127–30, 130n, 139, 154, 192–93, 193n, 194–95, 206, 211, 213, 232, 237, 252, 277, 291–92, 294–95, 300, 303, 307, 308n, 313–14, 337, 341, 368, 393
Respectful Prostitute, The, 241
Return of the Prodigal Sun, 360
Richard III, 241
Richardson, Tony, 83, 116, 132, 172, 192, 211, 241, 297n, 310–11, 315
Richter, Hans, 18, 31
Riefenstahl, Leni, 368
Riflemen, The, 314
Risi, 296
Rite, 5, 69, 113, 161–63, 211
Rivers, Fernand, 241
Rivette, Jacques, 65n, 106n, 109n, 117, 120n, 192, 201, 201n, 206, 212, 249n, 260, 260n, 307, 313
Robbe-Grillet, Alain, 60, 65, 75–78, 83, 83n, 104, 106, 106n, 109, 109nn, 110, 110n, 111–12, 127, 129, 129n, 130n, 138–39, 206, 209, 211, 232–33, 233n, 234, 234n, 235, 235n, 236, 236nn, 237, 237nn, 252, 292, 304–305, 307, 314, 321, 336, 341, 389–90, 390n, 391, 393
Robison, Arthur, 23

Rocambole, 21
Rocco and His Brothers, 169, 278
Rocha, Glauber, 191n
Rogopag, 296
Rohmer, Eric, 35, 35n, 46–47, 120, 120n, 122–23, 133, 221, 221n, 223, 249n, 260, 260nn, 266, 266n, 267, 279–80, 280n, 282n, 291, 295, 303, 305, 307, 308n
Roma, 190
Rome, 264
Rome Open City, 261
Rome Wants Another Caesar, 378
Rondolino, Gianni, 264n, 269n
Room at the Top, 310
Ropars-Wuilleumier, Marie-Claire, 129–30n, 139n
Rope, 112, 248
Rosenberg, Bernard, 13n
Rosi, 168, 277
Rossellini, Roberto, 35, 80, 117, 149–50, 163–64, 171, 224, 246, 249, 254, 256n, 259–60, 260nn, 261–62, 262n, 263, 263nn, 264, 264n, 265–66, 266nn, 267–69, 269n, 270, 270n, 276, 278–79, 281n, 282n, 283, 300, 339
Rotunno, Giuseppe, 195n
Rouch, Jean, 170–71, 280, 280n, 281, 281nn, 291, 293, 295, 324, 324n, 325, 370, 377
Roud, Richard, 148
Round-Up, The, 100, 113, 181, 209, 332, 334, 337
Rozier, Jacques, 277, 279, 324–25, 325n
Rózsa, János, 116, 323
Run Lola Run, 75–76
Russell, Ken, 69
Ruttman, Walter, 18, 27

Sacrifice, 388
Sadoul, Georges, 16n, 20n, 281n
Salamander, The, 118
Sanjuro, 115
Santis, Giuseppe De, 253, 253n
Saragossa Manuscript, The, 105, 336
Sartre, Jean-Paul, 90, 90n, 91–92, 92nn, 93, 93n, 95, 241, 398n
Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, 310
Satyricon, 68, 178–79, 186–87, 187nn, 200, 209–10, 339, 385
Saura, Carlos, 64, 141, 159, 161, 336, 379
Savage Messiah, 69
Schamoni, Ulrich, 173, 211, 311, 338
Scherben, 190
Scherer, Maurice, 260nn
Schérer, Mr., 249n
Schiller, Friedrich, 9, 9n, 10
Schlegel brothers, 9, 9n
Schlesinger, John, 60
Schlöndorff, Volker, 313, 329, 338, 356, 357, 364
Schmid, Daniel, 129, 131, 148, 189, 192, 199, 301, 379
Schönberg, Arnold, 148, 368
Schorm, Evald, 360
Schrader, Paul, 142
Schroeder, Barbet, 362
Scola, Ettore, 311n
Season for Love, The, 307
Seberg, Jean, 101, 273
Secrets of Women, 112, 271
Sedgwick, Edward, 226
Selznik, 219
Seta, Vittorio de, 189, 189n, 311n
Seven Deadly Sins, The, 296
Seventh Day, 355n
Seventh Seal, The, 96, 163
Seyrig, Delphine, 108
Shadow of Angels, 199
Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors, 337, 339, 377
Shakespeare, 16, 241
Shengelaya, Georgian Eldar, 116
Sherlock Jr., 226–27
Shindo, Kaneto, 191n
Shoot the Piano Player, 69, 115, 197, 247, 294, 296–97, 307
Shop on Main Street, The, 315, 327
Short Encounters, 165
Shukshin, Vasili, 170
Sica, Vittorio De, 87, 254–55, 263, 279, 319, 325
Sign of Leo, The, 279–80, 280n, 295
Silence, The, 63, 96, 165, 295

Silence and Cry, 181, 210
Sima, Jonas, 166
Sinbad, 139, 378
Singin' in the Rain, 228
Sirk, Douglas, 197–98
Six in Paris, 296
Sjöberg, Alf, 166, 241
Sjöman, Vilgot, 69, 118, 131–32, 170, 173, 192, 241, 293, 313–14, 322, 337, 364
Sjöström, Victor, 104, 166, 241
Skolimowski, Jerzy, 165
Sleep, 161
Smith, Jack, 32, 127, 210
Smith, Roch C., 109nn
Smoking/No Smoking, 75
Snow, Michael, 32
Soft Skin, The, 296
Solaris, 102, 161, 188, 190, 209, 212, 378, 390, 393
Solonitsyn, Anatoli, 343
Some Else's Children, 283
Spa, Robert, 20–21, 306
Spellbound, 248
Spider's Stratagem, The, 78, 129
Spirit of the Beehive, The, 379
Spirits of the Dead, 296
Staiger, Janet, 37n, 46n
Stack, Oswald, 184n
Stalker, 102, 161, 393–94
Stam, Robert, 218n, 225, 226n
State of Siege, 370–71
State of Things, The, 56, 322, 385–86
Stavisky, 76
Stiller, Mauritz, 166, 241
Story of a Love Affair, 96, 154, 247, 256–59, 268, 270
Strangers on a Train, 284n
Straub, Jean-Marie, 30, 32, 58, 118, 131, 135, 141, 148, 148n, 172, 192, 197–200, 206, 211, 232, 233n, 298, 301, 304–305, 311, 313, 337–38, 364, 364n, 365, 367–68, 371–73, 376
Strindberg, August, 83, 241
Stromboli, 149, 254, 259, 261–62
Successive Slidings of Pleasure, 138–39, 210
Summer with Monica, A, 362n
Sunset Boulevard, 228, 251n
Sweet Movie, 116, 136, 365, 372, 380–81
Swift, Jonathan, 11n
Syberberg, Hans-Jürgen, 189, 192, 196–97, 338, 357
Sydow, Max von, 167
Szabó, István, 132, 172, 206, 211, 304, 323, 339, 378
Szilágyi, Ákos, 175n, 188n, 393n
Szöts, István, 283

Taking Off, 116
Tanner, Alain, 118, 173
Tarantino, Quentin, 60, 75, 138, 244
Tarkovsky, Andrei, 66, 77, 83, 96, 102, 104, 108, 111, 127, 129, 137, 139, 148, 161, 163, 178, 187–88, 188n, 206, 211–13, 282–83, 286, 288, 290, 292, 301, 305, 322, 336, 341, 341n, 342–44, 346–48, 378, 384, 386–90, 390n, 391–93, 393n, 394
Tarr, Béla, 68, 126, 141, 156, 208, 256n, 304
Taste of Honey, 310
Taviani brothers, 182, 311n
Téchiné, André, 325, 326n
Tedesco, Jean, 23–24
Ten Thousand Days, 339
Ten Thousand Suns, 68
Tenth Victim, The, 116
Teorema, 68, 209, 339, 357, 365, 372–76, 378, 378n
Third Man, The, 246
Time to Live and a Time to Die, A, 69
Traveling Players, The, 181
Truck, The, 364
Two Fedors, The, 283
This Sporting Life, 310
Thompson, Christian Brad, 198n
Thompson, Kristin, 34n, 46, 46n, 47
Through a Glass Darkly, 96, 113, 162, 164–65, 294
Thulin, Ingrid, 167
Todini, Umberto, 186n
Tom Jones, 116, 172, 297n
Tomlinson, Hugh, 41n

Tonight or Never, 379
Tornatore, Giuseppe, 304
Torraca, Luigi, 186n
Tötenberg, Michael, 200n
Toubiana, Serge, 148–49, 291n
Toute la mémoire du monde, 130
Trans-Europ-Express, 75, 77, 109, 111–12, 209–10, 305, 336
Trauberg, 58
Trintignant, Jean-Louis, 111
Troell, Ian, 314
Truffaut, François, 1, 1n, 17, 40n, 69, 80–81, 83–84, 102, 106n, 115, 132, 137, 148, 170n, 172, 197, 206, 211, 220, 223–24, 235, 247, 248n, 249nn, 260n, 291, 293–94, 296, 303–304, 307, 307n, 308, 310–14, 323, 370
Turaj, Frank, 288n, 289n
Two or Three Things I Know About Her, 117–18, 125, 170, 209, 300, 305, 314, 349, 361, 364–66, 384
Tykwer, Tom, 75–76, 208

Ulmann, Liv, 167, 344
Umberto D., 79, 254–55, 263
Umbrellas of Cherbourg, The, 115–16
Unusual Occurrence, A, 116
Urbani, Giovanni, 377n

Vancini, Florestani, 311n
Varda, Agnès, 68, 75, 116, 139, 192, 192n, 277–79, 295, 308, 314, 368
Veidt, Konrad, 242
Venanzo, Gianni Di, 195n, 208n
Vertov, Dziga, 16, 16n, 18, 20n, 27, 118, 226–27, 227n, 261, 281, 281n, 368–70
Vigo, Jean, 18
Virgil, 183n
Virgin Spring, The, 163
Visconti, Luchino, 169, 247, 256–57, 277–78, 279n
Visit, A, 223
Vlacil, Frantisek, 213, 377
Vostrcil, Jan, 327
Voyage, 260, 264, 268
Voyage to Italy, 261–62, 266n

Wagner, Jean, 141n
Wajda, Andrzej, 68, 183–84, 189, 192, 228, 230, 278, 284–86, 289, 289n, 290, 290n, 294, 322, 378, 384
Walls, 364
Warhol, Andy, 32, 126–27, 127n, 161
Warren, 10n
Waters, John, 32
Wayward Love, 296
Wedding, The, 68, 183, 289, 378
Week-end, 81, 102, 125, 314, 339, 350, 366–68, 372, 380, 382
Wegener, Paul, 242
Welcome, 116
Wellek, 10n
Welles, Orson, 18, 36, 36n, 38n, 218–19, 224, 242, 247
Wenders, Wim, 56, 69, 81, 103, 129, 156, 158, 206, 211, 256n, 292, 322, 385–86
Wermüller, Lina, 311n
Weyergans, François, 303
Where Is the Friend's Home? 191n
White, David Manning, 13n
White Sheik, The, 271, 320n
Whity, 197–99, 383
Widerberg, Bo, 313, 313n, 314, 362
Wild Strawberries, 96, 103–104, 163–64, 321
Wilder, Billy, 228, 251n
Williams, Raymond, 8n, 14, 14n
Winckelmann, Johann, 9
Wind, The, 283
Wind from the East, The, 139
Winter Light, 63, 68–69, 96
Winter Wind, 379
Witches, The, 296
Witness, The, 355, 355n
Woll, Josephine, 294n
Wollen, Peter, 29, 29n, 30, 304, 305n
Woman Is a Woman, A, 294, 296
Wrong Man, The, 228
W.R.—Mysteries of the Organism, 116, 135
Wyler, William, 219, 241
Wyspianski, Stanislaw, 378

Yesterday Girl, 84, 118, 170, 173, 208–209, 213, 337–38, 359

Young Girls of Rochefort, The, 197
Young Törless, The, 329, 338

Z, 370
Zabriskie Point, 68, 362
Zalán, Vince, 198
Zanuck, Daniel, 219
Zanzibar Productions, 379n
Zavattini, 256, 263, 296, 319, 325
Zay, Jean, 24
Zazie in the Subway, 69, 116, 132, 195, 209, 294–97, 313, 323, 326
Zehetbauer, Rolf, 200